

THE  
Redeemer's Tears  
WEPT OVER  
**Lost Souls,**

A  
TREATISE  
ON  
LUKE XIX. 41, 42.

WITH AN  
**APPENDIX,**  
WHEREIN

Somewhat is occasionally discoursed,  
CONCERNING

*The Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,*  
AND

*How God is said to Will the Salvation of  
them that perish.*

By J. H. Minister of the Gospel.

LONDON,

Printed by J. Astwood for Thomas Parkhurst at the  
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PREFACE.

**W**HEN Spiritual Judgments do more eminently befall a people, great outward Calamities do often ensue. We know it was so in the instance, which the Text here insisted on refers to. But it is not alwaies so; The connection between these two sorts of Judgments is not absolutely certain and necessary, yea and is more frequent with the contraries of each. For this Reason therefore, and because Judgments of the former kind are so unexpressibly greater, and more tremendous, this Discourse insists only upon them, about which serious monitions both have a clearer ground, and are of greater importance; and wholly waves the latter.

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Too many are apt first to fancy similitudes between the state of things with one people and another, and then to draw inferences; being perhaps imposed upon by a strong imagination in both; which yet must pass with them for a Spirit of Prophecy, and perhaps they take it not well, if it do not so with others too. It were indeed the work of another Prophet certainly to accommodate, and make application of what was spoken by a former, to a distinct time and people. 'Tis enough for us to learn from such sayings as this of our Saviour, those rules of life and practice, such instructions and cautions as are common to all times, without arrogating to our selves his Prerogative, of foretelling events that shall happen in this or that. The affectation of venturing upon futurity, and of foreboding direful things to Kingdoms and Nations, may, besides its being without sufficient ground, proceed from some or other very bad Principle. Dislike of the present methods of Providence, weariness and impatience of our present condition, too great proneness to wish what

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what we take upon us to predict, the Prediction importing more heat of anger than certainty of foresight, a wrathful Spirit, that would presently fetch down fire from heaven upon such as favour not our inclinations and desires, so that (as the Poet speaks) whole Cities should be overturned at our request, if the heavenly Powers would be so easy, as to comply with such furious imprecations. A temper that ill agrees with Humanity it self, not to care at what rate of common calamity, and misery, a purchase be made of our own immunity from sufferings. Nay, to be willing to run the most desperate hazard in the case, and even covet a general ruine to others, upon a meer apprehended possibility that our case may be mended by it; when it may be more probable to become much worse. But O how disagreeable is it to the Spirit of our merciful Lord and Saviour, whose name we bear, upon any terms, to delight in humane miseries! The greatest honour men of that complexion are capable of doing the Christian Name, were



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to disclaim it. Can such angry heats have place in Christian breasts, as shall render them the well pleased spectators, yea authors of one anothers calamities and ruine! Can the tears that issued from these compassionate blessed eyes, upon the foresight of Jerusalem's woful Catastrophe, do nothing towards the quenching of these flames!

But I adde, that the too-intent fixing of our thoughts upon any supposeable events in this World, argues, at least, a narrow, carnal mind, that draws and gathers all things into time, as despairing of Eternity; and reckons no better state of things considerable, that is not to be brought about under their own present view, in this world; as if it were uncertain or insignificant, that there shall be unexceptionable, eternal, order, and rectitude in another.

'Tis again as groundless, and may argue as ill a mind, to prophesy smooth and pleasant things, in a time of abounding wickedness. The safer, middle course, is, without Gods express warrant, not to prophesy at all, but as we have opportunity, to warn and instruct

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struct men, with all meekness and long suffering; for which the Lords ordinary Messengers can never want his warrant. And, after our blessed Saviour's most imitable Example, to scatter our tears over the impenitent, even upon the ( too probable apprehension of the temporal Judgments which hang over their heads, but most of all upon the account of their liableness to the more dreadful ones of the other state; which, in the following discourse, I hope, it is made competently evident, this Lamentation of our Saviour hath ultimate reference unto. For the other, though we know them to be due, and most highly deserved; yet concerning the actual infliction of them, even upon obstinate and persevering sinners, we cannot pronounce. We have no settled constitution, or rule, by which we can conclude it, any more than that outward felicity, or prosperity, shall be the constant portion of good men in this World. The great God hath reserved to himself a latitude of acting more arbitrarily, both as to Promises, and Threatnings of this nature. If the accomplishment of either,

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could be certainly expected, it should be of the Promises rather; because as to promised Rewards God is pleased to make himself Debtor, and a right accrues to them to whom the Promise is made, if either the Promise be absolute, or made with any certain condition, that is actually performed. But God is always the Creditor *pœnæ*, the right to punish remains wholly in himself, the exacting whereof he may therefore suspend, without any appearance of wrong, as seemeth good unto him. If therefore he may withhold temporal blessings, from good and pious men, to which they have a remote and fundamental right, as having reserved to himself the judgment of the fit time and season of bestowing them. Much more doth it belong to his Wisdom, to fix the bounds of his Patience, and Long-suffering; and determine the season of animadverting upon more open and insolent offenders by temporal Punishments, according as shall make most for the ends of his Government, and finally prove more advantageous to the dignity and glory of it. The practice  
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therefore, of our Saviour, in speaking so positively, concerning the approaching fall and ruine of Jerusalem, is no pattern unto us. He spake not only with the Knowledge of a Prophet, but with the Authority of a Judge: and his words may be considered both as a Prediction, and a Sentence. We can pretend to speak in neither capacity, touching things of this nature.

But for the everlasting Punishments in another World, that belong to unreconciled sinners, who refuse to know the things of their peace, the Gospel-constitution hath made the connection firm, and unalterable, between their continuing, unrepented wickedness, and those punishments. When therefore we behold the impudent, provoking sins of the age wherein we live, against the natural, eternal law of our Creator, persisted in with all the marks of infidelity, and obduration, against the truth, and grace that so gloriously shine forth in the Gospel of our Redeemer, we may (after him) speak positively, He that believeth not shall be damned,



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ed, --- Is condemned already; --- shall not see Life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. If ye believe not that I am HE, ye shall die in your sins. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. And here, how doth it become us too, in conformity to his great example, to speak compassionately, and as those that, in some measure, know the terrour of the Lord! O how doleful is the case, when we consider the inconsistent notions of many, with, not this or that particular doctrine, or article of the Christian Faith, but with the whole summe of Christianity, the Atheisme of some, the avowed meer Theisme of others! The former sort far outdoing the Jewish infidelity. Which people; besides the rational means of demonstrating a Deity, common to them with the rest of mankind, could, upon the account of many things peculiar to themselves, be in no suspence concerning this matter. How great was their reverence of the books of the Old Testament, especially those of Moses! their knowledge most certain of plains, and most  
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convincing matters of fact. How long the Government of their Nation had been an immediate Theocracy! what evident tokens of the divine presence had been among them from age to age! in how wonderful a manner they were brought out of *Egypt*, through the Red Sea, and conducted all along through the Wilderness! how glorious an appearance and manifestation of himself God afforded to them at the giving of the Law, upon Mount Sinai! and by how apparent exertions of the divine power, the former inhabitants were expelled, and they settled in the promised land! Upon all this, they could be in no more doubt concerning the Existence of a Deity, than of the Sun in the firmament. Whereas we are put to prove, in a Christian nation, that this World, and its continual successive inhabitants, have a wise, intelligent Maker, and Lord, and that all things came not into the state wherein they are, by (no man can imagine what) either fatal necessity, or casualty.

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But both sorts agree in (what I would principally remark) the disbelief of Christs being the Messiah. And so, with both, the whole business of Christianity must be a Fable, and a Cheat. And thus it is determined, not by men that have made it their business to consider, and examine the matter (for the plain evidence of things cannot but even obtrude a conviction upon any diligent enquirer) but by such as have only resolved not to consider; who have before hand settled their purpose, never to be awed by the apprehension of an invisible Ruler, into any course of life that shall bear hard upon sensual inclination, have already chosen their Master, inflaved themselves to brutal appetite, and are so habituated to that mean servility, made it so conatural, so deeply inward to themselves, so much their very life, as that, through the preapprehended pain, and uneasiness of a violent rupture, in tearing themselves from themselves, it is become their interest not to admit any serious thought. Any such thought they are concerned (they reckon)

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to fence against, as against the point of a sword; it strikes at their only life, the brute must dy, that (by an happy ~~transformation~~) they may be again born men. That is the design of Christianity, to restore men to themselves again, and because it hath this tendency, it is therefore not to be endured. And all the little residue of humane wit which is yet left them (which because the sensual nature is predominant, is prest into a subserviency to the interest, and defence of the brutal life) only serves them to turn every thing of serious Religion into ridicule, and being themselves resolved never to be reasoned into any seriousness, they have the confidence to make the trial, whether all other men can be jested out of it.

If this were not the case, if such persons could allow themselves to think, and debate the matter, how certain would the victory, how glorious would the Triumph be, of the Christian Religion, over all the little cavils, they are wont to alledge against it! Let their own consciences testifie in the case, whether ever they have applyed themselves to any solemn disquisition, concerning this important affair, but only

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contented themselves with being able, amidst transient discourse, to cast out, now and then, some oblique glance, against somewhat or other, that was appendent, or more remotely belonging, to the Christian Profession (in so much haste, as not to stay for an answer) and because they may have surprised, sometimes, one or other, not so ready at a quick repartee, or who reckoned the matter to require solemn, and somewhat larger discourse. (which they have not had the patience to hear) whether they have not gone away puffed, and swoln with the conceit, that they have whistled Christianity away, quite off the stage, with their prophane breath; as if its firm and solid strength, wherein it stands stable, as a rock of Adamant, depended upon this or that sudden, occasional, momentary effort on the behalf of it. But if such have a mind to try whether any thing can be strongly said in defence of that sacred profession, let them considerately peruse what hath been written by divers to that purpose. And not to engage them in any very tedious long some task, if they like not to travel thorough the somewhat

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abstruser work of the most learned Hugo Grotius, de veritate Christianæ Religionis, or the more voluminous Huetius his Demonstratio Evangelica, or divers others that might be named, let them but patiently and leasurably read over, that later very plain and clear, but nervous and solid Discourse of Dr. Parker upon this subject, and judge then, whether the Christian Religion want evidence, or whether nothing can be alledged, why we of this age, so long after Christ's appearance upon the stage of the World, are to reckon our selves obliged to profess Christianity, and observe the rules of that holy Profession.

And really, if, upon utmost search, it shall be found to have firm truth at the bottom, it makes it self so necessary (which must be acknowledged part of that Truth) that any one that hath wit enough, to be the author of a jeast, might understand it to be a thing not to be jeasted with. It trifles with no man. And, where it is once sufficiently propounded, leaves it no longer indifferent whether we will be of it or no. Supposing it  
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*true; it is strange if we can pretend it not to be sufficiently propounded to Us. Or that we are destitute of sufficient means to come by the knowledge of that Truth! was this Religion instituted only for one Nation, or Age? Did the Son of God descend from Heaven, put on flesh, and dy? had we an incarnate Deity conversant among men on earth, and made a Sacrifice for the sins of men? and bath he left the World at liberty, whether, upon any notice hereof, they should enquire and concern themselves about him or no? being incarnate he could not, as such, be every where; nor was it fit he should be long here; or needful, (and therefore not fit) he should dye often. It was condescension enough that he vouchsafed once to appear, in so mean and self-abasing a form, and offered himself to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself. And whereas he hath himself founded a Dominion over us in his own blood, did dye, and revive, and rise again, that he might be Lord of the living, and of the dead; And the eternal Father hath hereupon highly exalt-*

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ed him, given him a name above every name, that at his name every knee should bow, and that all should confess that he is Lord, to the praise and glory of God. And hath required that all should honour the Son as himself is to be honoured; hath given him power over all flesh; and made him head of all things to the Church. Was it ever intended, men should, generally, remain exempt from obligation, to observe, believe, and obey him? was it his own intention to wave, or not insist upon, his own most sacred, and so dearly acquired rights? to quit his claim to the greatest part of mankind? why did he then issue out his commission as soon as he was risen from the dead, to teach all nations, to proselyte the world to himself, to baptize them into his name, (with that of the Father and the Holy Ghost. O the great and venerable names that are named upon professing Christians!) Could it be his intention, to leave it lawful to men to choose this, or any, or no Religion, as their humours, or fancies, or lusts, should prompt them; to disregard, and de-

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ride his holy doctrines, violate and trample upon his just and equal Lawes, reject and contemn his offered favours and mercy, despise and profane his sacred institutions! When he actually makes his demand, and lays his claim, what amazing guilt, how swift destruction must they incur, that dare adventure to deny the Lord that bought them! And they that shall do it, among a Christianized people, upon the pretended insufficiency of the revelation they have of him, do but heighten the affront, and increase the provocation. 'Tis to charge the whole Christian Institution with foolery, as pretending to oblige men, when they cannot know to what, how, or upon what ground they should be obliged; to pronounce the means and methods inept, and vain, which he hath thought sufficient (and only fit) for the propagating and continuing Christianity in the world; to render the rational reception of it from age to age, impossible, in his appointed way; or unless men should be taught by Angels, or voices from Heaven, or that Miracles should be so very frequent, and common,

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as, thereby also to become useless to their end; and so would be to make the whole frame of Christian Religion an idle impertinency; and, in reference to its avowed design, a self-repugnant thing, and consequently were to impute Folly to him who is the Wisdom of God.

And how are other things known, of common concernment, and whereof an immediate knowledge is as little possible? Can a man satisfy himself that he hath a title to an estate, conveyed down to him by very ancient writings, the witnesses whereof are long since dead and gone? or that he is obliged by Laws made many an age ago? Or could any Records be preserved with more care and concern, than those wherein our Religion lies? or be more secure from designed, or material depravation? But this is no place to reason these things. Enough is said by others, referred to before. I only further say, if any that have the use of their Understandings, living in a Christian Nation, think to justify their infidelity and disobedience to the Son of God, by pretend-

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ing they had no sufficient means to know him to be so, the excuse will avail them alike, as that did him, who insolently said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord, neither will I, &c. For have not we as good means to know who Christ is, as the Egyptians, at that time had, to know who was the God of Israel, (tho afterwards he was more known by the judgments which he executed?) Although the knowledge of the only true God be natural, and the obligation thereto, common to men; yet the indisposition to use their understanding this way, is so great and general, and the expresse Revelation that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, requires so much less labour to understand it, than there is in arguing out the existence and attributes of God, by an inhabile, sluggish mind, that the difference cannot be great, if any, on that side. This latter only needs the enquiry, whence the Revelation comes, which as it is not difficult in it self, so this occasion, viz. of its being proposed; doth invite  
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and urge to it; whereas the generality of the Pagan World have little of external inducement, leading them into enquiries concerning the true God. Therefore, all circumstances considered, I see not how they that live under the Gospel, can be thought to have less advantage and obligation, to own Jesus of Nazareth to be the Son of God, than the rest of the World, to own the only living and true God; Or that the former should be less liable to the revelation of the wrath of God from heaven, for holding supernatural truth in unrighteousness, than the other, for doing so injurious violence to that which is meerly natural. Unto what severities then, of the divine wrath and justice, even of the highest kind, do multitudes ly open in our daies!

For besides those (much fewer) mental (or notional) Infidels, that believe not the principles of the Christian Religion, against the clearest evidence, how vastly greater is the number of them that are so, in heart and practice, against their professed belief! that live in utter estrangement from God, as without him in the World, or in open enmity against him, and contrariety to the known Rules of the Religion

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they profess! *How many that understand nothing of its principal and plainest Doctrines! as if nothing were requisite to distinguish the Christian from the Pagan World, more than an empty name; or as if the Redeemer of sinners had dy'd upon the Crosse, that men might more securely remain alienated from the life of God, not to reconcile and reduce them to him! or that they might with safety indulge appetite, mind earthly things, make the World their God, gratifie the flesh, and make provision to fulfill the lusts of it, defy Heaven, affront their Maker, live in malice, envy, hatred to one another! not to bless them, by turning them from these impieties and iniquities! As if it were so obscurely hinted, as that it could not be taken notice of, that the grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared, reaching them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World, SO looking for the blessed hope. And that Christ gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify us to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good Works!* *How many, again, are Christians, they know*

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not why ! upon the same terms that others are Mahometans, because it is the Religion of their Countrey, by fate or by accident, not by their own choice and judgment ! the same inconsideration makes them be Christians, that makes others be none.

And now, shall our Redeemer be left to weep alone, over these perishing souls ! have we no tears to spend upon this doleful subject ? Oh that our heads were waters, and our eyes fountains ! Is it nothing to us, that multitudes are sinking, going down into Perdition, under the name of Christian, under the seal of Baptism, from under the means of life and salvation ! perishing ! and we can do nothing to prevent it. We know they must perish that do not repent and turn to God, and love him above all, even with all their hearts and souls, and mind and might, that do not believe in his Son, and pay him homage, as their rightful Lord, sincerely subjecting themselves to his laws and government. But this they will not understand, or not consider. Our endeavours to bring them to it, are ineffectual, 'tis but faint breath we utter. Our Words drop and dye between us and them ! We speak to  
them

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them in the name of the eternal God that made them, of the great Jesus who bought them with his blood, and they regard it not. The Spirit of the Lord is in a great degree departed from among us, and we take it not to heart! We are sensible of lesser grievances, are grieved that men will not be more entirely proselyted to our several parties and persuasions, rather than that they are so disenclin'd to become proselytes to real CHRISTIANITY; and seem more deeply concerned to have Christian Religion so or so modify'd, than whether there shall be any such thing! or whether men be saved by it, or lost!

This sad case, that so many were likely to be lost under the first sound of the Gospel; and the most exemplary temper of our blessed Lord in reference to it, are represented in the following Treatise; with design, to excite their care for their own souls, who need to be warned, and the compassions of others, for them, who are so little apt to take warning. The good Lord grant it may be, some way or other, useful for good!

John Howe.



THE  
REDEEMERS TEARS

Wept over

LOST SOULS.

LUKE XIX. 41, 42.

*And when he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy Peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*

**W**E have here a compassionate Lamentation in the midst of a solemn Triumph. Our Lords approach unto *Jerusalem* at this time, and his entrance into it (as the foregoing History shewes) carried with  
B them



them some face of *regal* and *triumphal pomp*, but with such allayes, as discovered a mind most remote from Ostentation ; and led by Judgment, ( not Vain-glory ) to transmit thorough a dark umbrage, some glimmerings only of that *excellent Majesty* which both his *Sonship* and his *Mediatorship* entitled him unto : A very modest and mean *specimen* of his true indubious *Royalty* and *Kingly-state*. Such as might rather *intimate* than *plainly declare* it, and rather afford an *after Instruction* to teachable minds, than beget a *present Conviction* and dread in the stupidly obstinate and unteachable. And this effect we find it had, as is observ'd by another *Evangelical Historian*, who relating the same matter, how in his passage to *Jerusalem* the People met him with *Branches of Palm-trees*, and joyful *Hosanna's*, he riding upon an *Asses Colt* ( as Princes or Judges, to signify Meekness as much as State, were wont to do, *Judg. 5. 10.* ) tells us, *These things his Disciples understood not at the first, but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto*

unto him, Joh. 12. 16. For great regard was had *in this*, as in all the other acts of his Life and Ministry, to that last and conclusive part, *his dying a sacrifice upon the Cross for the sins of men*; to observe all along that Mediocrity, and steer that middle course between *obscurity* and a *terrifying overpow'ring glory*, that this solemn oblation of himself might neither be prevented, nor be *disregarded*. Agreeably to this design, and the rest of his Course, he doth, in this solemnity, rather discover his Royal state and dignity by a *dark Emblem*, than by an *express representation*; and shews in it more of *Meekeness and Humility*, than of *awful Majesty and Magnificence*, as was formerly predicted, Zechar. 9. 9. Rejoyce greatly, O Daughter of Zion: Shout, O Daughter of Jerusalem: Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having Salvation, lowly, and riding upon an Ass, and upon a Colt, the foal of an Ass.

And how little he was taken with this piece of state, is sufficiently to be seen in this Paragraph of the Chapter. His mind is much more taken up in

the foresight of Jerusalem's sad case; and therefore being come within view of it, ( which he might very commodiously have in the descent of the higher opposite Hill, Mount Olivet, ) he beheld the City, 'tis said, and wept over it.

Two things concur to make up the cause of this sorrow.

1. The greatness of the Calamity: Jerusalem ( once so dear to God ) was to suffer, not a Skar, but a Ruine; *The dayes shall come upon thee, that thine Enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy Children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another.*

2. The lost opportunity of preventing it; *If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy Peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes, vers. 42. And again, Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*

First, The Calamity was greater in his eyes, than it can be in ours. His large and comprehensive mind could take

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take the compass of this sad case. Our thoughts cannot reach far, yet we can apprehend what may make this case very deplorable; we can consider *Jerusalem* as the City of the great King, where was the Palace and Throne of the Majesty of Heaven, vouchsafing to dwell with men on Earth. Here the divine Light and Glory had long shone. Here was the the sacred *Shechinah*, the dwelling place of the most High, the Symbols of his presence, the Seat of Worship, the Mercy Seat, the place of receiving Addresses, and of dispensing favours: *The House of Prayer for all Nations*: To his own People this was the City of their Solemnities, *Whither the Tribes were wont to go up, the Tribes of the Lord, unto the Testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the Name of the Lord: For there were set Thrones of Judgment, the Thrones of the House of David*, Psa. 122. 4, 5. He that was so great a lover of the Souls of men, how grateful and dear to his Heart had the place been where through the succession of many by-past Ages the great God did use (though more obscurely) to unfold his kind Propen-



sions towards Sinners, to hold solemn Treaties with them, to make himself known, to draw and allure Souls into his own holy Worship and acquaintance ! And that now the dismal prospect presents it self of desolation and ruine, ready to overwhelm all this glory ! and lay wast the dwellings of Divine Love ! His sorrow must be conceiv'd proportionable to the greatness of this desolating change.

*Secondly*, And the opportunity of prevention was quite lost ! There was an opportunity : *He was sent to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel : He came to them as his own.* Had they received him, O how joyful a place had *Jerusalem* been ! How glorious had the Triumphs of the Love of God been there, had they Repented, Believed, Obeyed ! These were the *things that belonged to their Peace* ; this was their opportunity, their *day of Visitation* ; these were the things that might have been done within that day : But it was now too late, their day was over, and the *things of their Peace hid from their eyes* : And how fervent were his desires, they had done otherwise ! taken

ken the wise and safe course: If thou hadst known! the words admit the *Operative form*, *ei* being put, as 'tis observed to be sometimes with other Authors, for *de*, *utimam*; O that thou hadst known, I wish thou hadst; his Sorrow must be proportionable to his Love. Or otherwise we may conceive the Sentence incompleat, part cut off by a more emphatical *Apostrophe*, Tears interrupting Speech, and imposing a *more speaking* silence, which imports an affection beyond all words. They that were anciently so over-officious as to raise those words [ *and wept over it* ] out of the *Canon*, as thinking it unworthy so Divine a Person to shed Tears, did greatly erre, not knowing the Scriptures ( which elsewhere speak of our Lords Weeping, ) nor the Power of Divine Love ( now become Incarnate ) nor indeed the true Perfections and Properties of Humane Nature: Otherwise they had never taken upon them to reform the Gospel, and reduce not only *Christianity*, but *Christ* himself to the measures and square of their *Stoical Philosophy*: ( But these have also met with a *like-ancient* Confutation. )

One thing (before we proceed) needs some disquisition, *viz.* Whether this Lamentation of our blessed Lord do refer only or ultimately to the temporal calamity he foresaw coming upon Jerusalem. Or whether it had not a further and more principal reference to their spiritual and eternal miseries that were certain to be concomitant, and consequent thereunto? Where let it be considered,

1. That very dreadful spiritual plagues and judgments did accompany their destruction very generally; which every one knows who is acquainted with their after-Story, *i. e.* that takes notice what Spirit reign'd among them, and what their behaviour was towards our Lord himself, and afterwards towards his Apostles and Disciples all along to their fearful Catastrophe (as it may be collected from the sacred Records, and other history,) what blindness of mind, what hardness of heart, what mighty prejudice, what inflexible obstinacy, against the clearest light, the largest mercy, the most perspicuous and most gracious Doctrine, and the most glorious works, wrought to confirm it, against the brightest beams and

and evidences of the divine Truth, Love and Power ! what persevering impenitency and infidelity against God and Christ, proceeding from the bitterest enmity ; ( *Ye have both seen and hated me and my Father. Joh. 15. 24.* ) What mad rage and fury against one another, even when death and destruction were at the very door ! Here were all the tokens imaginable of the most tremendous infatuation, and of their being forsaken of God. Here was a concurrence of all kinds of spiritual judgments in the highest degree.

2. *That the concomitancy of such spiritual evils with their temporal destruction, our Lord foreknew as well as their temporal destruction it self.* It lay equally in view before him ; and was as much under his eye. He that knew *what was in man*, could as well tell *what would be in him*. And by the same light by which he could immediately look into hearts, he could as well see into futurities, and as well the one futurity as the other. The knowledge of the one he did not owe to his humane understanding ; to his divine understanding ( *whereby he knew all things* )



things) the other could not be hid.

3. The connection between the impenitency and infidelity that prove to be final; and eternal misery, is known to us all. Of his knowledge of it therefore (whose Law hath made the connection, besides what there is in the nature of the things themselves) there can be no doubt.

4. That the miseries of the Soul, especially such as prove incurable and eternal, are in themselves far the greatest, we all acknowledge. Nor can make a difficulty to believe, that our Lord apprehended and considered things according as they were in themselves, so as to allow every thing its own proper weight and import in his estimating of them. These things seem all very evident to any eye.

Now tho' it be confessed not impossible, that of things so distinct from one another as outward and temporal evils, and those that are spiritual and eternal, even befalling the same persons, one may for the present consider the one without attending to the other, or making distinct reflection thereon at the same time; Yet how unlikely

unlikely is it, these things bordering so closely upon one another as they did, in the present case; that so *comprehensive a mind* as our Saviours was, sufficiently able to inclose them both; and so *spiritual a mind*, apt no doubt to consider most what was in it self most considerable, should in a solemn Lamentation of so sad a case, wholly overlook the saddest part! and stay his thoughts only upon the surface and outside of it!

That he mentions only the approaching outward calamity, (*vers. 43. 44.*) was that he spake in the hearing of the multitude, and upon the way, but in passing, when there was not opportunity for large discourse; and therefore he spake what might soonest strike their minds, was most liable to common apprehension, and might most deeply affect ordinary, and not-yet-enough-prepared hearers.

And he spake what he had, no doubt, a deep sense of himself. Whatever of tender compassions might be expected from the most perfect Humanity and Benignity, could not be wanting in him, upon the foresight  
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of such a calamity as was coming upon that place and people. But yet what was the sacking of a City, the destroying of pompous buildings that were all of a perishable material, the mangling of humane flesh, over which the worm was otherwise shortly to have had dominion; to the Alienation of mens minds from God, their disaffection to the only means of their recovery, and reconciliation to him, and their subjection to his Wrath and Curse for ever! When also 'tis plain he considered that perverse temper of mind and spirit in them, as the cause of their ruine! which his own words imply; that *the things which belonged to their peace were hid from their eyes*; and that the things he foretold, should befall them, *because they knew not the day of their Visitation.*

For what could the *things* be that *belong'd to their peace*, but turning to God, believing in himself, as the *Messiah*, bringing forth of fruits meet for repentance? Whence also there must be another latent, and conceal'd meaning of *their peace* it self; than only their continued amity with the *Roman*

*man State.* Their peace with Heaven; their being set right, and standing in favour and acceptance with God. For was it ever the *first intention* of the things enjoyn'd in the Gospel, but to entitle men to earthly secular benefits?

Nor can we doubt but the same things lay deep in the mind of our blessed Lord when he uttered these words, as when he spake those so very like them, *Mat. 23. 37, 38. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy Children together even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.* These other were not spoken indeed at the same time, but very soon after: *Those* we are considering, in his way to the City, *these* when he was come into it; most probably, by the Series of the Evangelical History the second day, after his having lodg'd the first night at *Bethany*. But it is plain they have the same sense, and that the same things lay with great weight upon his Spirit;



rit; so that the one passage may contribute much to the enlightning and expounding of the other.

Now what can be meant by that [ *I would have gathered you as the Hen her Chickens under her wings?* ] Could it intend a political meaning? that he would have been a Temporal Prince and Saviour to them; which he so earnestly declined and disclaimed? professing to the last *his Kingdom was not of this world?* It could mean no other thing, but that he would have reduced them back to God, have gathered and united them under his own gracious and safe Conduct in order thereto, have secured them from the divine Wrath and Justice, and have confer'd on them spiritual and eternal blessings. In a like sense their *peace* here, was no doubt more principally to be understood; and their loss and forfeiture of it, by their not understanding the things belonging thereto, considered and lamented.

Therefore the principal intendment of this Lamentation, tho' directly apply'd to a Community, and the formed body of a people, is equally applicable

cable unto particular persons living under the Gospel, or to whom the ordinary means of their Conversion and salvation are vouchsafed, but are neglected by them and forfeited.

We may therefore thus summe up the meaning and sense of these words.

*That it is a thing in it self very lamentable, and much lamented by our Lord Jesus, when such as living under the Gospel, have had a day of grace, and an opportunity of knowing the things belonging to their peace, have so outworn that day, and lost their opportunity, that the things of their peace are quite hid from their eyes.*

Where we have these distinct heads of discourse to be severally considered and insisted on.

1. *What are the things necessary to be known by such as live under the Gospel, as immediately belonging to their peace.*

2. *That they have a day or season wherein to know not these things only, but the whole compass of their case, and what the knowledge of those things more immediately belonging to their peace supposes, and depends upon.*

3. *That*

3. *That this day hath its bounds and limits,* so that when it is over and lost; those things are for ever hid from their eyes.

4. *That this is a case to be considered with deep resentment, and lamentation, and was so by our Lord Jesus.*

1. *What are the things necessary, to be known by such as live under the Gospel, as immediately belonging to their peace.* Where we are more particularly to enquire,

1. *What those things themselves are.*

2. *What sort of Knowledge of them it is, that is here meant, and made necessary.*

1. *What the things are which belong to the Peace of a People living under the Gospel?* The things belonging to a Peoples Peace, are not throughout the same with all. *Living, or not living* under the Gospel makes a considerable difference in the matter. Before the Incarnation and publick appearance of our Lord, something was not necessary among the Jews, that afterwards became necessary. It was sufficient to them before, to believe in a *Messiah* to come, more indefinitely.  
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Afterwards he plainly tells them, *if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall dye in your sins*, Joh. 8. 24. Believing in Christ cannot be necessary to Pagans that never heard of him, *as a duty*, howsoever necessary it may be *as a means*. Their not believing in him cannot be *it self* a sin, tho by it they should want remedy for their other sins. But it more concerns us who do live under the Gospel, to apprehend aright what is necessary for our selves. That is a short and full summary which the Apostle gives *Acts 20. 21. Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*. The Gospel finds us in a state of Apostacy from God, both as our *Sovereign Ruler*, and *Sovereign Good*, not apt to obey and glorifie him, as the former, nor enjoy him, and be satisfi'd in him, as the latter. *Repentance towards God* cures and removes this disaffection of our minds and hearts towards him, under both these notions. By it the whole Soul turns to him, with this sense and resolution. [ I have been a rebellious disloyal Wretch, against the high Authority, and most rightful Government of him  
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who gave me breath, and whose creature I am, I will live no longer thus. Lo now I come back unto thee, O Lord, *thou art my Lord and God. Thee* I now design to serve and obey, as the *Lord of my Life, thee* I will fear, unto thee I subject my self, to live no longer after my own will, but thine; I have been hitherto a miserable forlorn distressed Creature, destitute of any thing that could satisfie me, or make me happy; have set my heart upon a vain and thorny world, that had nothing in it answerable to my real necessities, that hath flattered and mockt me often, never satisfi'd me, and been wont to requite my pursuits of satisfaction from it with vexation and trouble, and *pierce me through with many sorrows.* I have born in the mean time a disaffected heart towards thee, have therefore cast thee out of my thoughts, so that amidst all my disappointments and sorrows, it never came into my mind to say, *Where is God my Maker?* I could never savour any thing spiritual or divine, and was ever ready, in distress, to turn my self any way than (that  
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which I ought) towards thee. I now see and bemoan my folly, and with a convinced, self-judging heart, betake my self to thee; *The desires of my Soul are now unto thy Name, and to the remembrance of thee. Whom have I in Heaven but thee, or on earth that I can desire besides thee.* ] do to olden

This is *Repentance towards God*; and is one thing belonging, and most simply necessary to our Peace. But tho' it be most necessary, it is not enough. It answers to something of our wretched case, but not to every thing. We were in our state of Apostacy, averse, and disaffected to God. To this evil, Repentance towards him is the opposite, and only proper Remedy. But besides our being without *inclination towards him*, we were also without *Interest in him*. We not only had unjustly cast off him, but were also most justly cast off by him. Our Injustice had set us against him, and his Justice had set him against us; we need, in order to our Peace with him, to be relieved as well against his Justice, as our own Injustice. What if, now we would return to him, he will not receive us?

And he will not receive us for our own sakes. He must have a recompence for the wrong we had done him, by our rebellion against his Government, and our contempt of his goodnes. Our repentance is no expiation. Nor had we of our own, or were capable of obliging him to give us the power and grace to repent. Our high violation of the sacred rights and honour of the Godhead, made it necessary, in order to our peace and reconciliation, there should be a *sacrifice*, and a *Mediatour* between him and us. He hath judg'd it not honourable to him, not becoming him to treat with us, or vouchsafe us favours upon other terms. And since he thought it necessary to insist upon having a sacrifice, he judg'd it necessary too, to have one proportionable to the wrong done; lest he should make the Majesty of Heaven cheap, or occasion men to think it a light matter to have fundamentally overturn'd the common order which was settled between himself and men. The whole earth could not have afforded such a sacrifice, it must be supply'd from Heaven.

ven. His coeternal Son made man, and so uniting Heaven and Earth in his own person, undertakes to be that sacrifice, and, in the vertue of it, to be a standing continual Mediatur between God and us; Through him, and for his sake, all acts and influences of grace are to proceed towards us. No sin is to be forgiven, no grace to be confer'd but upon his account. 'Tis reckon'd most God-like, most suitable to the divine Greatnes, once offended, to do nothing that shall import favour towards sinners, but upon his constant interposition. Him hath he set over us, and directed that all our applications to himself, and all our expectations from him, should be thorough him. *Him hath he exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give us repentance and remission of Sins.* Acts 9.31 Now to one so high in power over us, he expects we should pay a suitable homage. That homage the Holy Scripture calls by the name of Faith, believing on him. God hath set him forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through

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*the forbearance of God; to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Rom. 3. 25, 26. So that when by repentance we turn to God, as our end, we must also apply our selves by faith, to our Lord Jesus Christ, as our way to that end. Which till we do, we are in rebellion still, and know not what belongs to our peace. He insists that his Son into whose hands he hath committed our affairs, should be honoured by us, as he himself requires to be. John 5. 23.*

Now these two things summe up our part of the Covenant between God and us. *By repentance* we again take God for our God. Repenting we return to him as our God. *By Faith* we take his Son for our Prince and Saviour. These things, by the tenour of the Evangelical Covenant, are required of us. Peace is settled between God and us (as it is usually with men towards one another after mutual hostilities) by striking a Covenant. And in our case, it is a Covenant by sacrifice, as you have seen. Nor are harder terms than these impos'd upon us.

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Dost thou now, sinner, apprehend thy self gone off from God? And find a war is commenced and on foot, between God and thee? He can easily conquer and crush thee to nothing, but he offers thee termes of peace, upon which he is willing to enter into Covenant with thee. Dost thou like his termes? Art thou willing to return to him, and take him again for thy God? To resign and commit thy self with unfeigned trust and subjection, into the hands of his Son thy Redeemer? These are the things *which belong to thy Peace*. See that thou now *know them*.

2. But *what knowledge of them* is it that is here meant? The thing speaks it self. It is not a meer contemplative knowledge. We must so know them as to do them; otherwise the increase of knowledge is the increase of sorrow. Thy guilt and misery will be the greater. To know any thing that concerns our practice, is to no purpose if we do not practise it. It was an *Hebrew* form of speech, and is a common form, by words of knowledge to imply practice. It being ta-

ken for granted that in matters so very reasonable, and important, if what we are to do, once be *rightly known*, it will be done. Thus elsewhere the same great requisites to eternal life and blessednes are expressed by our Lord. *This is life eternal to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*; It being supposed and taken for granted that a true vivid knowledge of God and Christ will immediately form the soul to all futable dispositions and deportments towards the one and the other; and consequently to all men also, as Christian precepts do direct to all the acts of sobriety, justice and charity unto which the law of Christ obliges. An habitual course of Sin in any kind, is inconsistent with this knowledge of the things of our peace, and therefore with our peace it self. All Sin is in a true sense reducible to ignorance; and *customary sinning* into total destitution of divine knowledge. According to the usual style of the sacred writings, 1 Cor. 15. 34. *Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God.* 3 John 11. *He*

II. He that sinneth (*i. e.* that is a doer of sin, *ὁ κακοποιῶν*, a worker of iniquity) hath not seen God.

II. Such as live under the Gospel have a day, or a present opportunity, for the obtaining the knowledge of these things immediately belonging to their peace, and of whatsoever is besides necessary thereunto. I say nothing what opportunities they have who never liv'd under the Gospel; who yet no doubt might generally, know more than they do; and know better what they do know. It suffices us who enjoy the Gospel, to understand our own advantages thereby. Nor, as to those who do enjoy it, is every ones day of equal clearnes. How few in comparison, have ever seen such a day as Jerusalem at this time did! made by the immediate beams of the Sun of righteousness! Our Lord himself vouchsafing to be their instructor, so speaking as never man did; and with such authority as far outdid their other Teachers, and astonisht the hearers. In what transports did he use to leave those that heard him, wheresoever he came,  
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wondering at the gracious words that came out of his mouth! And with what mighty and beneficial works was he wont to recommend his doctrine, shining in the glorious power, and favouring of the abundant mercy of Heaven, so as every apprehensive mind might see the Deity was incarnate, God was come down to treat with men, and allure them into the knowledge and love of himself. *The word was made flesh.* What unprejudic'd mind might not perceive it to be so? He was there manifested and veiled at once; both expressions are used concerning the same matter. The divine beams were somewhat obscured, but did yet ray through that veil; so that *his glory was beheld as the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.* This Sun shone with a mild and benign but with a powerful vivifying light. *In him was life, and that life was the light of men.* Such a light created unto the *Jewes this their day.* Happy Jewes, if they had understood their own happines! And the dayes that followed, *to them* (for a while) and the  
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the *Gentile world* were not inferiour, in some respects brighter and more glorious (the more copious gift of the Holy Ghost being reserv'd unto the crowning and enthroning of the victorious Redeemer) when the everlasting Gospel flew like lightning to the utmost ends of the earth; and the word *which began to be spoken by* Heb. 2. 4. *the Lord himself, was confirm'd by them that heard him, God also himself bearing them witness, with signs, and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost.* No such day hath been seen this many an age. Yet whithersoever the same Gospel, for substance, comes, it also makes a *day of the same kind*, and affords alwaies true, tho' diminisht, light; whereby, however, the things of our peace might be understood and known. The written Gospel varies not; and if it be but simply and plainly propos'd (tho' to some it be propos'd with more advantage, to some with less, yet) still we have the same things *immediately relating to our Peace* extant before our eyes; and divers things, besides, which it concerns us to be acquainted with that we may the more distinctly,

distinctly, and to better purpose understand these things. For instance,

1. *We have the true and distinct state of the quarrel between God and us.* Pagans have understood somewhat of the apostacy of man from God; that he is not in the same state wherein he was at first. But while they have understood that something was amiss, they could scarce tell what. The Gospel reveals the universal pravity of the degenerate nature even of all men, and of every faculty in man.
- Rom. 3. *That there is none that doth good, no not one; and that every one is altogether become filthy and impure, that there*
- Eph. 4. *is an entire old man to be put off; wholly corrupt by deceitable lusts, that the *αινεσις*, the noblest powers are vitiated, the mind and conscience defiled, that the Spirit of the mind needs renewing, is sunk into carnality; and that the carnal mind is enmity against*
- Rom. 8. *God; and is not subject to his law, nor can be; nor capable of favouring the things of God; that the Sinner is in the flesh, under the dominion and power, and in the possession of the fleshly sensual nature, and can therefore*  
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neither obey God, nor enjoy him; that it is become impossible to him either to please God, or be pleased with him. That the sinners quarrel therefore with God is about the most appropriate rights of the Godhead; the controversy is who shall be God, which is the Supream authority, and which is the Supream good. The former peculiarity of the Godhead, the lapsed creature is become so insolent, as to usurp and arrogate to himself. When he is become so much less than a man (a very beast) he will be a God. His sensual will shall be his only law. He lives and walks after the flesh, *serves divers lusts and pleasures*, and saies *who is Lord over me?* But being conscious that he is not self-sufficient, that he must be beholden to somewhat foreign to himself for his satisfaction, and finding nothing else sutable to his sensual inclination; that other divine peculiarity *to be the Supream good* he places upon the sensible world; and for this purpose *that shall be his God*; So that between himself and the world he attempts to share the *undivided Godhead*.

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This is a controversy of an high nature, and about other matters than even the Jewish Rabbins thought of, who when *Jerusalem* was destroy'd, supposed God was angry with them *for their neglect of the recitation of their Phylacteries morning and evening; or that they were not respectful enough of one another; or that distance enough was not observ'd between superiours and inferiours, &c.* The Gospel impleads men as rebels against their rightful Lord; but of this Treason against the Majesty of Heaven men little suspect themselves till they are told. The Gospel tells them so plainly, represents the matter in so clear light, that they need only to contemplate themselves in that light, and they may see that so it is. Men may indeed, by resolved, stiff, winking, create to themselves a darknes amidst the clearest light. But open thine eyes man, thou that livest under the Gospel, set thy self to view thine own soul, thou wilt find *it is day with thee*; thou hast a day, by being under the Gospel, and light enough to see that this is the posture of thy Soul, and the state  
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of thy case Godward. And it is a great matter towards the understanding the things of thy peace, to know aright what is the true state of the quarrel between God and thee.

2. *The Gospel affords light to know what the issue of this quarrel is sure to be, if it go on, and there be no reconciliation.* It gives us other and plainer accounts of the punishments of the other world; more fully represents the extremity, and perpetuity of the future miseries, and state of perdition appointed for the ungodly world. Speaks out concerning the *Tophet prepared of old, the lake of fire and brimstone*; Ila. 30. Rev. 21. shewes the miseries of that state to be the immediate effects of divine displeasure; that *the breath of the Almighty as a river of brimstone alwaies fomentes those flames*; that *indignation and wrath cause the tribulation and anguish* Rom. 2. which must be the portion of evil doers; and how *fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God* Heb. 10.! Gives us to understand what accession mens own unaltered vicious habits will have to their miseries; their own outrageous lusts and passions,

2 Cor. 5.

Gal. 6.

ons, which here they made it their business to satisfy, becoming their insatiable tormentours; that they are to receive [*the things done*] in the body, according to what they have done; and that what they have sowed [*the same*] also they are to reap; and what their own guilty reflections will contribute, the bitings and gnawings of the worm that dies not, the venomous corrosions of the Viper bred in their own bosoms, and now become a full-grown Serpent; what the society and insultation of Devils, with whom they are to partake in woes and torments, and by whom they have been seduced and train'd into that cursed partnership and communion; and that this fire wherein they are to be tormented together is to be everlasting, a fire never to be quenched. If men be left to their own conjectures only, touching the danger they incur by continuing and keeping up a war with Heaven, and are to make their own hell, and that it be the creature only of their own imagination; 'tis like they will make it as easie and favourable as they can; and so are little likely to be

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state of torment. It only saies this that it may render the more acceptable to you what it hath to say besides; and only threatens you with these things if there be no reconciliation between God and you. But then at the same time,

3. It also represents God to you as reconcilable through a Mediatour. In that Gospel peace is preacht to you, by Jesus Christ. That Gospel lets you see God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, that sin may not be imputed to them. That Gospel proclaims glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will towards men. So did the voices of Angels summe up the glad tidings of the Gospel, when that Prince of peace was born into the world. It tells you God desires not the death of sinners, but that they may turn and live; that he would have all men be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth: that he is long suffering towards them, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance: that he so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting

*ing Life.* The rest of the world can but collect, from darker intimations, Gods favourable propensions towards them. He spares them, is patient towards them, that herein, *his goodnes might lead them to repentance.* He sustains them, lets them dwell in a world which they might understand was of his making, and whereof he is the absolute Lord. *They live move and have their being in him, that they might seek after him, and by feeling find him out.* He doth them good, gives them rain from Heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their Hearts with food and gladnes. He lets his Sun shine on them, whose far extended beams shew forth his kindnes and benignity to men, even to the utmost ends of the earth. For there is no speech or language whither his line and circle reaches not. But those are but dull and glimmering beams in comparison of those that shine from the Sun of Righteousnes through the Gospel-revelation, and in respect of that divine glory which appears in the face of Jesus Christ. How clearly doth the light of this Gospel-day reveal Gods design

of reducing Sinners, and reconciling them to himself by a Redeemer! How canst thou but say, sinner, thou hast a day of it? and clear *day-light* shewing thee what the good and acceptable will of God towards thee is? Thou art not left to *guess* only, thou mayst be reconciled and find mercy, and to grope and feel thy way in the dark, unless it be a darknes of thy own making. And whereas a Sinner, a disloyal rebellious creature, that hath affronted the Majesty of Heaven, and engaged against himself the wrath and justice of his Maker, and is unable to make him any recompence, can have no reason to hope God will shew him mercy, and be reconciled to him for his own sake, or for any thing he can do to oblige or induce him to it; the same Gospel shewes you plainly, it is for the Redeemers sake, and what he hath done and suffered to procure it. But inasmuch also as the sinner may easily apprehend, that it can never answer the necessities of his state and case, that God only be *not his enemy*, that he forbear hostilities towards him, pursue him not with

with vengeance to his destruction. For he finds himself an indigent creature, and he needs somewhat beyond what he hath ever yet met with to make him happy; that it is uneasy and grievous to wander up and down with craving desires among varieties of objects that look speciously, but which, either he cannot so far compass as to make a trial what there is in them, or where-with, upon trial, he finds himself mock't and disappointed, and that really they have nothing in them: He finds himself a mortal creature, and considers that if he had all that he can covet in this world, the increase of his present enjoyments doth but increase unto him trouble and anguish of heart, while he thinks what great things he must shortly leave and lose for ever; to go he knows not whither, into darksome gloomy regions; where he cannot so much as imagine any thing suitable to his inclinations and desires. For he knowes all that is defectable to his present sense he must here leave behind him; and he cannot divest himself of all apprehensions of a future state, wherein if God



should make him suffer nothing, yet if he have nothing to enjoy, he must be alwaies miserable.

4. *The Gospel, therefore, further represents to him the final eternal blessednes, and glorious state, which they that are reconcil'd shall be brought into. They that live under the Gospel are not mock't with shadowes, and empty clouds, or with fabulous Elysiums. Nor are they put off with some unintelligible notion of only being happy in the general. But are told expressely wherein their happiness is to consist. Life and immortality are brought to light in the Gospel. 'Tis given them to understand how great a good is laid up in store. The things which eye hath not seen, and ear not heard, and which otherwise could not have entered into the heart of man, the things of Gods present and eternal Kingdome, are set in view. It shewes the future state of the reconcil'd shall consist not only in freedom from what is evil, but in the enjoyment of the best and most delectable good. That God himself in all his glorious fulnes will be their eternal and most satisfying portion. That their blessednes is*  
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to ly in the perpetual fruitive *vision of his blessed face*, and in the *fulnes of joy*, and the *everlasting pleasures* which the divine presence it self doth perpetually afford. And whereas their glorious Redeemer is so nearly ally'd to them, flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone, who *inasmuch as the children were made partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same*, Heb. 2. 14. and is become by special title their authoriz'd Lord, they are assured ( of that, than which nothing should be more grateful to them ) *they shall be for ever with the Lord*; that *they are to be where he is, to behold his glory*; and shall be *joynt-heires with Christ*, and be *glorify'd together with him*, shall partake, according to their measure and capacity, in the same blessednes which he enjoyes. Thou canst not pretend, sinner, who livest under the Gospel, that thou hast not the *light of a day* to shew thee what blessednes is, Heaven is opened to thee. Glory beams down from thence upon thee to create thee a day, by the light whereof thou may'st see with sufficient clearnes, what is the *inheritance of the Saints in light*. And tho' all is not told thee, and it do not in

every respect appear what we shall be; so much may be foreknown that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, and shall see him as he is. 1 Joh. 3. 1, 2. And because the heart, as yet carnal, can favour little of all this; and finding it self strange and disaffected to God, affecting now to be without Christ and without God in the world, may easily apprehend it impossible to it to be happy in an undesired good, or that it can enjoy what it dislikes; or, in the mean time, walk in a way to which it finds in it self nothing but utter averlenes and disinclination,

5. The Gospel further shewes us what is to be wrought and done in us to attemper and frame our spirits to our future state and present way to it. It lets us know we are to be born again, born from above, born of God, made partakers of a divine nature, that will make the temper of our spirits connatural to the divine presence. That whereas God is light, and with him is no darknes at all; we, who were darknes shall be made light in the Lord. That we are to be begotten again to a lively hope, to the eternal and undefiled inheritance

range that is reserved in the heavens for us. That we are thus to be made meet to be partakers of that inheritance of the Saints in light. And as we are to be eternally conversant with Christ, we are here to put on Christ, to have Christ in us the hope of glory. And whereas only the way of holiness and obedience leads to blessednes, that we are to be created in Christ Jesus to good workes to walk in them. And shall thereupon find the wayes prescribed to us by him, who is the Wisdom of God, to be all waies of pleasantnes and paths of peace. That he will put his Spirit into us, and cause us to walk in his statutes, and to account that in keeping them there is great reward. And thus all that is contained in that mentioned summary of the things belonging to our peace, Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ will all become easy to us; and as the acts of nature; proceeding from that new and holy nature, imparted to us.

And whosoever thou art that livest under the Gospel, canst thou deny that it is day with thee, as to all this?



this? wast thou never told of this great necessary heart-change? Didst thou never hear that the *tree must be made good that the fruit might be good?* that thou must become a *new creature, have old things done away, and all things made new?* Didst thou never hear of the necessity of having a *new heart*, and a *right spirit* created and renewed in thee; that except thou wert *born again, or from above* (as that expression may be read) thou could'st *never enter into the Kingdom of God?* wast thou kept in ignorance that a form of Godliness without the power of it would never do thee good? that a name to live without the principle of the holy divine life would never save thee? that a specious outside, that all thy external performances, while thou went'st with an unrenovated, earthly carnal heart, would never advantage thee as to thy eternal salvation and blessednes? And this might help thine understanding concerning the nature of thy future blessednes, and will be found most agreeable to it, being aright understood; for as thou art not to be blessed by a blessednes

sednes without thee and distant from thee, but inwrought into thy temper, and intimately united with thee, nor glorified by an external glory but by a glory revealed within thee: So nor canst thou be qualify'd for that blessed glorious state otherwise than by having the temper of thy Soul made habitually holy and good. As what a good man partakes of happines here is such, that he is *satisfy'd from himself*, so it must be hereafter, not originally from himself, but by divine communication made most intimate to him. Didst thou not know that it belonged to thy peace, to have a peace-maker? and that the Son of God was he? and that he makes not the peace of those that despise and refuse him, or that receive him not, that come not to him, and are not willing to come to God by him? Couldst thou think, living under the Gospel, that the reconciliation between God and thee was not to be mutual? that he would be reconcil'd to thee while thou wouldst not be reconcil'd to him, or shouldst still bear towards him a disaffected implacable heart? For couldst thou

thou be so void of all understanding as not to apprehend what the Gospel was sent to thee for? or why it was necessary to be preached to thee, or that thou should'st hear it? who was to be reconciled by a Gospel preached to thee but thy self? who was to be perswaded by a Gospel sent to thee? God, or thou? who is to be perswaded but the unwilling? The Gospel, as thou hast been told, reveals God willing to be reconciled, and thereupon beseeches thee to be reconcil'd to him? Or could it seem likely to thee thou couldst ever be reconcil'd to God, and continue unreconcil'd to thy reconciler? To what purpose is there a dayes-man, a middle person between God and thee, if thou wilt not meet him in that middle person? Dost thou not know that Christ avails thee nothing if thou still stand at a distance with him, if thou dost not unite and adjoyn thy self to him, or art not in him? And dost thou not again know that divine power and grace must unite thee to him? and that a work must be wrought and done upon thy Soul by an almighty hand, by God himself,

self, a mighty transforming work to make thee capable of that union? that <sup>2 Cor. 5.</sup> whosoever is in Christ is a new crea-<sup>17.</sup> ture? that thou must be [ of God ] <sup>1 Cor. 1.</sup> <sup>30.</sup> in Christ Jesus, who then is made un- to thee ( of God also ) wisdom, righte- ousnes, sanctification, and redemption; every way answering the exigency of thy case, as thou art a foolish, guilty, impure, and enslav'd, or lost creature? Didst thou never hear, that *none can come to Christ but whom the Father drawes?* and that he drawes the reasonable souls of men not violently or against their wills ( he drawes, yet drags them not ) but makes them *willing* in the *day of power*, by giving a new nature, and new inclina- tions to them. 'Tis sure with thee not dark night, nor a dubious twilight, but broad day as to all this.

Yes, perhaps thou mayst say, but this makes my case the worse not the better; For it gives me at length to understand that what is necessary to my peace and welfare is *impossible to me*; And so the light of my day doth but serve to let me see my self miserable and un- done, and that I have nothing to do to re- lieve and help my self. I therefore adde

6. That



6. That by being under the Gospel men have not only light to understand whatsoever is any way necessary to their peace, but opportunity to obtain that communication of divine power and grace whereby to comply with the terms of it. Whereupon, if this be made good, you have not a pretence left you to say your case is the worse, or that you receive any prejudice by what the Gospel reveals of your own impotency to relieve and help your selves; or determines touching the terms of your peace and salvation, making such things necessary thereto, as are to you impossible, and out of your own present power; unless it be a prejudice to you not to have your pride gratify'd; and that God hath pitch't upon such a method for your Salvation, as shall wholly turn to the praise of the glory of his grace, or that you are to be
- i Cor. 1.  
30---31. [of him] in Christ Jesus—that who-  
soever glories might glory in the Lord.
- Is it for a sinner that hath deserved, and is ready to perish, to insist upon being saved with reputation? or to envy the great God upon whose pleasure it wholly depends whether he shall

shall be saved or not saved, the entire glory of saving him? For otherwise, excepting the meer business of glory, and reputation; is it not all one to you whether you have the power in your own hands of changing your hearts, of being the authours to yourselves, of that holy new nature, out of which actual faith and repentance are to spring, or whether you may have it from the God of all grace, flowing to you from its own proper divine fountain? Your case is not sure really the worse that your salvation from first to last is to be all of grace, and that it is *impossible to you* to repent and believe, while it is not *simply impossible*; but that he can effectually enable you thereto, *unto whom all things are possible*; supposing that he will (whereof by and by.) Nay and it is more glorious and honourable, *even to you*, if you understand yourselves, that your case is so stated as it is. The Gospel indeed plainly tells you that your repentance must be given you. Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour *to give repentance*, and remission of sins. And so must your faith,

faith, and that frame of spirit which is the principle of all good works. By grace ye are saved, through faith, not of your selves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast: for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Ephes. 2. 8, 9, 10. Is it more glorious to have nothing in you but what is self-sprung, than to have your souls the seat and recepracle of divine communications; of so excellent things as could have no other than an heavenly original? If it were not absurd and impossible you should be self-begotten, is it not much more glorious to be born of God? As they are said to be that receive Christ. Joh. 1. 12, 13. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And now that by being under the Gospel, you have the opportunity of getting that grace, which is necessary to your peace, and salvation; you may

may see, if you consider what the Gospel is, and was designed for. It is the *ministration of the Spirit*; that Spirit by which you are to be born again. *Joh. 3. 3, 5, 6.* The work of regeneration consists in the impregnating, and making lively and efficacious in you the holy truths contained in the Gospel. *Of his own good will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. Jam. 1. 18.* And again, *being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, 1 Pet. 1. 23.* So our Saviour prays. *Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth. Joh. 17. 17.* The Gospel is upon this account called *the word of life, Phil. 2. 16.* as by which the principles of that divine and holy life are implanted in the soul, whereby we live to God, do what his Gospel requires, and hath made our duty, and that ends at length in eternal life.

But you will say, shall all then that live under the Gospel obtain this grace and holy life? or if they shall not, or, if so far as can be collected, multitudes do not, or perhaps in some

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places



places that enjoy the Gospel very few do, in comparison of them that do not, what am I the better? when perhaps it is far more likely that I shall perish notwithstanding, than be saved?

In answer to this, it must be acknowledged that all that live under the Gospel do not obtain life and saving grace by it. For then there had been no occasion for this lamentation of our blessed Lord over the perishing inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, as having *lost their day*, and *that the things of their peace were now hid from their eyes*, and by that instance it appears too possible that even the generality of a people living under the Gospel, may fall at length into the like forlorn and hopeless condition.

But art thou a man that thus objectest? a reasonable understanding creature? or dost thou use the reason and understanding of a man in objecting thus? Didst thou expect that when thine own wilful transgression had made thee liable to eternal death and wrath, peace and life and salvation should be impos'd upon thee whether thou would'st or no, or notwithstanding thy most wilful neglect and contempt

tempt of them, and all the means of them? Could it enter into thy mind, that a reasonable soul should be wrought and framed for that high and blessed end, whereof it is *radically* capable, as a stock or a stone is for any use it is designed for; without designing its own end or way to it? Couldst thou think the Gospel was to bring thee to faith and repentance whether thou didst hear it or no? or ever apply thy mind to consider the meaning of it, and what it did propose and offer to thee? or when thou mightest so easily understand that the grace of God was necessary to make it effectual to thee, and that it might become his power (or the instrument of his power) to thy salvation, couldst thou think it concern'd thee not, to sue and supplicate to him for that grace? when thy life lay upon it, and thy eternal hope? Hast thou lain weltring at the foot-stool of the throne of grace in thine own tears (as thou hast been formerly weltring in thy sins and impurities) crying for grace to help thee in this time of thy need? And if thou thinkest this was above thee and with-

out thy compas, hast thou done all that was within thy compas in order to the obtaining of grace at Gods hands?

But here perhaps thou wilt enquire, 'Is there any thing then to be done by us, whereupon the grace of God may be expected certainly to follow?

To which I answer, 1. That it is out of question nothing can be done by us to deserve it, or *for which* we may expect it to follow. It were not grace if we had obliged, or brought it by our desert under former preventive bonds to us. And 2. What if nothing can be done by us *upon which* it may be [certainly] expected to follow? Is a certainty of perishing better than an high probability of being saved? 3. Such as live under the Gospel have reason to apprehend it highly probable they may obtain that grace which is necessary to their salvation, if they be not wanting to themselves. For 4. There is generally afforded to *such* that which is wont to be call'd *common grace*. I speak not of any further extent of it, 'tis enough to our present purpose, that it extends so far,

far, as to them that live under the Gospel, and have thereby a day allow'd them wherein to provide for their peace. Now tho' this grace is not yet certainly saving, yet it tends to that which is so. And none have cause to despair but that being duly improv'd and comply'd with, it may end in it.

And this is that which requires to be insisted on, and more fully evinced; In order whereto let it be considered, That it is expressly said *to such* they are to *work out their salvation with fear and trembling* for this reason, that God works (or is working *ἔστιν ὁ ἐνεργῶν*) *in them*, i. e. is stately, and continually at work, or is alwaies ready to work in them, *to will, and to do, of his own good pleasure.* Phil. 2. 12, 13. The matter fails not on his part. He will work on in order to their salvation, if they work in that way of subordinate cooperation, which his command, and the necessity of their own case oblige them unto. And it is further to be considered, that where God had formerly afforded the *symbols* of his gracious presence, given *his oracles*, and settled his *Church*, tho' yet in it's *Minority*, and



much more imperfect state, there he however communicated those influences of his Spirit, that it was to be imputed to themselves if they came short of the saving operations of it. Of such it was said, *Thou gavest thy good spirit to instruct them.* Nehem. 9. 20. And to such, *Turn ye at my reproof, I will pour out my spirit to you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, but ye set at nought my counsel, and despised all my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity, &c.* Prov. 1. 23, 24. We see whence their destruction came, not from Gods first restraint of his Spirit, but their refusing, despising, and setting at nought his counsels and reproofs. And when it is said, *they rebelled and vexed his spirit, and he therefore turn'd, and fought against them, and became their enemy,* Isa. 63. 10. It appears that before, his Spirit was not withheld, but did variously, and often make essays, and attempts upon them. And when *Stephen* immediately before his Martyrdom thus bespeaks the descendents of *these Jewes, Ye stiff-necked,*

neaked, and uncircumcised, — ye do alwayes resist the holy Ghost, as your Fathers did, so do ye. Act. 7. 'Tis imply'd the holy Ghost had been alwayes striving from age to age with that stubborn people; for where there is no counter-striving there can be no resistance, no more than there can be a war on one side only. Which also appears to have been the course of Gods dealing with the old world, before their so general lapse into Idolatry and sensual wickednes, from that passage, Gen. 6. 3. (according to the more common reading and sense of those words.)

Now whereas the Gospel is eminently said to be the ministratation of the spirit in contradistinction not only to the *natural Religion* of other nations, but the *divinely instituted Religion* of the *Jewes* also, as is largely discoursed 2 Cor. 3. and more largely through the Epistle to the *Galatians*, especially chap. 4. and whereas we find that, in the *Jewish Church*, the holy Ghost did generally diffuse its influences, and not otherwise withhold them, than penally, and upon great provocation, how much more may it be concluded

that under the Gospel, the same blessed Spirit is very generally at work upon the souls of men, till by their resisting, grieving and quenching of it, they provoke it to retire and withdraw from them.

And let the Consciences of men living under the Gospel testify in the case. Appeal sinner to thine own conscience; Hast thou never felt any thing of conviction, by the word of God? hadst thou never any thought injected of turning to God, of reforming thy life, of making thy peace? have no desires ever been raised in thee, no fears? hast thou never had any tastes and relishes of pleasure in the things of God? whence have these come? what from thy self? who art not sufficient to think any thing as of thy self, *i. e.* nor any good or right thought? All must be from that good Spirit that hath been striving with thee; and might still have been so unto a blessed issue for thy soul, if thou hadst not neglected and disobeyed it.

And do not go about to excuse thy self by saying, that so all others have done

done too, 'tis like at one time or other ; and if *that* therefore be the rule and measure, that they that contend against the strivings, and motions of Gods Spirit must be finally deserted, and given up to perish, who then can be saved ? Think not of pleading so for thy neglecting and despising the grace and Spirit of God. 'Tis true ; that herein the great God shews his sovereignty, when all that enjoy the same advantages for salvation deserve by their slighting them to be forsaken alike ; he gives instances and makes examples of just severity, and of the victorious power of grace as seems him good, which there will be further occasion to speak more of hereafter. In the mean time the present design is not to justifie thy condemnation but procure thy salvation, and therefore to admonish and instruct thee, that, tho thou art not sure, because some others that have slighted and despised the grace and Spirit of God are notwithstanding conquered and saved thereby, it shall therefore fare as well with thee ; yet thou hast reason to be confident, it will be well and happy for thee



thee if, *now*, thou despise and slight them not. And whether thou do or do not, it is however plain that by thy being under the Gospel thou *hast had a day*, wherein to mind the things of thy peace (tho it is not told thee it would last alwaies, but the contrary is presently to be told thee.)

And thou may'st now see 'tis not only a day in respect of *light*, but *influence* also; that thou might'st not only know notionally what belong'd thereto, but efficaciously and practically, which you have heard is the knowledge here meant. And the concurrence of such light and influence have made thee a season wherein thou wast to have been at work for thy soul. *The day* is the proper season for work, when the night comes working ceases, both because that then *light fails*, and because *drowsines and sloth* are more apt to possesse men. And the night will come. For (which is the next thing we are to speak to,)

III. *This day hath its bounds and limits, so that when it is over, and lost with such, the things of their peace are for*

for ever hid from their eyes. And that this day is not infinite and endless, we see in the present instance. *Jerusalem* had her day; but that day had its period, we see it comes to this at last, that now the things of her peace are hid from her eyes. We generally see the same thing, in that sinners are so earnestly prest to make use of the present time. To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, *Psal. 95.* quoted and urged *Heb. 3. 7, 8.* They are admonish't to seek the Lord while he may be found, to call upon him while he is nigh. It seems some time he will not be found, and will be afar off. They are told *this is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation.* *Isa. 55.*

This day, with any place or people, supposes a precedent night, when the day-spring from on high had not visited their horizon, and all within it sate in darknes, and in the region and shadow of death. Yea and there was a time, we know, of very general darknes, when the Gospel day, the day of Visitation had not yet dawn'd upon the world; times of ignorance, wherein God as it were winkt upon the nations of the

*Isa. 49.*  
*2 Cor. 6.*

earth; the beams of his eye did in a sort overshoot them, as the word *circumscribes* imports. But when the eyelids of the morning open upon any people, and light shines to them with direct beams, they are now commanded to repent *Act. 17. 30.* limited to the present point of time with such peremptories, as that noble *Roman* used towards a proud Prince, asking time to deliberate upon the proposal made to him of withdrawing his forces that molested some of the allies of that state, he draws a line about him with the end of his rod, and requires him now, out of hand, before he stir'd out of that Circle to make his choice, whether he would be a friend or enemy to the people of *Rome*. So are sinners to understand the state of their own case. The God of thy life, sinner, in whose hands thy times are, doth with much higher right, limit thee to the present time, and expects thy present answer to his just and merciful offers and demands. He circumscribes thy day of grace; it is inclosed on both parts, and hath an evening as well as a morning; as it had a foregoing,

so it hath a subsequent night, and the *latter*, if not *more dark*, yet usually much *more stormy* than the *former*. For God shuts up this day in much displeasure, which hath terrible effects. If it be not expressly told you what the condition of that night is that follows your Gospel-day; If the Watchman being asked, *what of the night?* do only answer it *cometh as well as the morning came*; black events are signify'd by that more awful silence. Or 'tis all one if you call it *a day*; there is enough to distinguish it from the *day of grace*. The Scriptures call such a calamitous season indifferently either by the name of night or day: but the latter name is used with some or other adjunct to signify *day* is not meant in the pleasant or more grateful sense: a *day of wrath*, an *evil day*, a *day of gloomines and thick darknes*, not differing from the most dismal night; and to be told the morning of such a day is coming, is all one, as that the evening is coming of a bright and a serene day.

And here perhaps, Reader, thou wilt expect to be told *what are the li-*  
*mits*



*mits of this day of grace?* It is indeed much *more difficult* punctually to assign those limits, than to ascertain thee there are such: but it is also *less necessary*. The wise and merciful God doth in matters of this nature little mind to gratifie our curiosity; much less is it to be expected from him, that he should make known to us such things, whereof it were better we were ignorant, or the knowledge whereof would be much more a prejudice to us than an advantage. And it were as bold and rash an undertaking, in this case, as it would be vain and insignificant, for any man to take upon him to say, in it, what God hath not said, or given him plain ground for. What I conceive to be plain and useful in this matter I shall lay down in the following propositions, insisting more largely where the matter requires it, and contenting myself but to mention what is obvious, and clear at the first sight.

1. That there is a great difference between the ends and limits of the day or season of grace *as to particular persons*, and in reference to the *collective*

*the body of a people*, inhabiting this or that place. It may be over with such or such a place, so as that they that dwell there shall no longer have the Gospel among them, when as yet it may not be over with every particular person belonging to it, who may be providentially cast elsewhere, or may have the *ingrafted word* in them, which they lose not. And again it may be over with some particular persons in such a place, when it is not yet over with that people or place, generally considered.

2. *As to both* there is a difference between the ending of such a day, and *intermissions*, or *dark intervals*, that may be in it. The Gospel may be withdrawn from such a people, and be restored. And God often no doubt, as to particular persons, either deprives them of the outward means of grace, for a time (by sickness, or many other waies) or may for a time, forbear moving upon them by his Spirit, and again try them with both.

3. *As to particular persons*, there may be much difference between *such*, as, while they liv'd under the Gospel, *gained*

gained the knowledge of the principal doctrines (or of the summe and substance) of Christianity; tho' without any sanctifying effect, or impression upon their hearts, and such as through their own negligence, liv'd under it in total ignorance hereof. The day of grace may not be over with the former, tho' they should never live under the ministry of the Gospel more. For it is possible, while they have the seeds and principles of holy truth laid up in their minds, God may graciously administer to them many occasions of recollecting and considering them, where-with he may so please to cooperate, as to enliven them, and make them vital and effectual to their final salvation. Whereas, with the other sort, when they no more enjoy the external means, the day of grace is like to be quite over, so as that there may be no more hope in their case than in that of Pagans in the darkest parts of the world, and perhaps much less, as their guilt hath been much greater by their neglect of so great and important things. It may be better with Tyre and Sidon, &c.

4. That

4. That yet it is a terrible judgment *to the most knowing*, to lose the external dispensation of the Gospel, while they have yet no sanctifying impression upon their hearts by it, and they are cast upon a fearful hazard of being lost for ever, being left by the departed Gospel, in an unconverted state. For they need the most urgent inculcations of *Gospel-truths*, and the most powerful enforcing means, to ingage them to consider the things which they know. It is the design of the Gospel to beget not only *light* in the mind, but *grace* in the heart. And if that was not done while they enjoyed such means, it is less likely to be done without them. And if any slighter, and more superficial impressions were made upon them thereby, short of true and thorough conversion, how great is the danger that all will vanish, when they cease to be prest, and urged, and called upon by the publick voice of the Gospel Ministry any more. How naturally desident is the spirit of man, and apt to sink into deadnes, worldlines and carnality, even under the most lively and quickning means; and even where a saving

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work



work hath been wrought ; how much more when those means fail, and there is no vital principle within, capable of self-exottation and improvement. O that they would consider this, who have got nothing by the Gospel all this while, but a little cold, spiritles, notional knowledge, and are in a possibility of losing it before they get any thing more!

5. That as it is *certain death ends the day of grace with every unconverted person*, so it is very possible it *may end with divers before they dye* ; by their total loss of all external means, or by the departure of the blessed Spirit of God from them, so as to return and visit them no more. How the day of grace may *end* with a person, is to be understood by considering what it is that *makes up and constitutes* such a day. There must be *some measure and proportion of time* to make up this ( or any ) day which is as the *substratum*, and *ground forelaid*. Then there must be *light superadded*, otherwise it differs not from *night*, which may have the same measure of *meer time*. The Gospel revelation, some way or other, must

must be had, as being the *light of such a day*. And again there must be *some degree of liveliness, and vital influence*, the more usual concomitant of light; the night doth more dispose men to drownsines. The same Sun that enlightens the world, disseminates also an invigorating influence. If the *Spirit of the living God* do no way *animate the Gospel revelation*, and breathe in it, we have no day of grace. It is not only *a day of light*, but *a day of power*, wherein souls can be wrought upon, and a people made willing to become the Lords. *Psal. 110.* As the Redeemer revealed in the Gospel, is *the light of the world*, so he is *life* to it too, tho neither are planted, or do take root every where. *In him was life, and that life was the light of men.* That light that raies from him is *vital light in it self*, and in its tendency and design, tho it be disliked, and not entertained by the most.

Whereas therefore these things must concur to make up such a day: if either a *mans time, his life on earth* expire, or if *light* quite fail him, or if all *gracious influence* be withheld, so as to

be communicated no more ; his day is done, the season of grace is over with him. Now it is plain that many a one may lose the Gospel before *his life end* ; and possible that all *gracious influence* may be restrained, while as yet the *external dispensation* of the Gospel remains. A sinner may have hardened his heart to that degree, that God will attempt him no more, in any kind, with any design of kindness to him, not in that more *inward, immediate* way at all, *i. e.* by the *motions of his Spirit*, which *peculiarly* can import nothing but friendly inclination, as whereby men are *personally apply'd* unto, so that another cannot be meant ; nor by the *voice of the Gospel*, which may either be continued *for the sake of others*, or *they* continued under it, but for their heavier doom at length. Which tho' it may seem *severe*, is not to be thought *strange*, much less *unrighteous*.

It is not to be thought *strange* to them that read the Bible, which so often speaks this sense, as when it warns and threatens men with so much terror, as *Heb. 10. 26, 27, 28, 29.* For if we *sin wilfully* after that we have received

ceived the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath troden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath [done despite unto the Spirit of grace?] And when it tells us, after many overtures made to men in vain, of his having given them up, &c. Psal. 81. 11, 12. But my people would not hearken to my voice: and Israel would none of me; So I gave them up unto their own hearts lust; and they walked in their own counsels; and pronounces, Let him that is unjust, be unjust still, and let him which is filthy, be filthy still. Rev. 22. 11. and sayes, In thy filthines is lewdnes, because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged; thou shalt not be purged from thy filthines any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. Ezek. 24. 13. Which passages seem to imply a



total desertion of them, and retraction of all gracious influence. And when it speaks of letting them be under the Gospel, and the ordinary means of salvation, for the most direful purposes. As that, *This Child ( Jesus ) was set for the fall ( as well as for the rising ) of many in Israel, Luk. 2. 34. As to which Text* the very learned *Grotius* glossing upon the words *utrum* and *is* *etiam*, sayes, *Accedo iis qui non necdum eventum, sed & consilium*, that he is of their opinion who think that not the naked event, but the counsel or purpose of God is signify'd by it, the same with *utrum*; and alledges several Texts where the active of that verb must have the same sense, as to appoint, or ordain; and mentions divers other places of the same import with this so understood; and which therefore to recite will equally serve our present purpose, as that *Rom. 9. 33. Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling Stone, and rock of offence. And 1 Pet. 2. 8. The stone which the builders refused is made a Stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed-*

pointed. With that of our Saviour himself. *Joh. 9. 39.* For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not, might see; and that they which see, might be made blind. And most agreeable to those former places is that of the Prophet *Isai. 28. 13.* But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. And we may adde that our Lord hath put us out of doubt that there is such a sin as that which is eminently called *The sin against the Holy Ghost*; that a man may, in such circumstances, and to such a degree, *sin against that blessed Spirit*, that he will never move, or breathe upon them more, but leave them to an hopeless ruin. Tho I shall not in this discourse, determine or discusse the nature of it. But I doubt not it is somewhat else, than *final impenitency, and infidelity*; and that every one that dies, not having sincerely repented and believed, is not guilty of it, tho every one that is guilty of it, dies impenitent and

unbelieving ; but was guilty of it before ; so as it is not the meer want of time, that makes him guilty. Whereupon therefore, that *such* may outlive their day of grace, is out of question.

But let not such, as, upon the descriptions the Gospel gives us of that sin, may be justly confident they have not perhaps committed it, therefore think themselves out of all danger of losing their season of making their peace with God before they dy. Many a one *may*, no doubt, that never committed the *unpardonable blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, as he is the witness, by his wonderful works, of Christs being the Messiah.* As one may dy, by neglecting himself, that doth not poyson himself, or cut his own throat. You will say, but if the Spirit retire from men, so as never to return, where is the difference ? I answer, the difference lies in the *Specific nature*, and greater hainousnes of that sin, and consequently, *in the deeper degrees of its punishment.* For tho the reason of its unpardonableness lies not principally in its greater hainousnes, but in its direct repugnancy to the way of obtaining pardon,

pardon, yet there is no doubt of its being much more hainous than many other sins, for which men perish. And therefore 'tis in proportion more severely punish't. But is it not misery enough to dwell in darknes and wo for ever, as every one that dies unreconcil'd to God must do, unles the most intense flames and horror of Hell be your portion? As his case is sufficiently bad that must dy as an ordinary Felon, tho' he is not to be hang'd, drawn, and quartered.

Nor is there any place, or pretence for so prophane a thought, as if there were any colour of *unrighteousnes* in this course of procedure with such men. Is it unjust severity to let the Gospel become deadly to them, whose own malignity perverts it, against its nature, and genuine tendency, into a *favour of death*, as 2 Cor. 2. 16. which it is τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, i. e. to them, (as the mentioned *Authour* speaks) who may be truly said to seek their own destruction? or that God should intend their more aggravated condemnation, even from the despised Gospel it self, who, when such light is come into the world,  
hate



hate it, shew themselves *lucifuga, tenebriones*, (as he also phrases it, speaking further upon that first mentioned Text,) *such as fly from the light, chuse and love to lurk in darkness?* He must have very low thoughts of divine favour and acceptance, of Christ, and grace, and glory, that can have hard thoughts of God, for his vindicating, with greatest severity, the contempt of such things. What could better become his glorious majesty, and excellent greatness, than, as *all things work together for good towards them that love him*, so to let all things work for the hurt of them that so irreconcilably hate him, and bear a disaffected and implacable mind towards him? Nor doth the addition of *his designing the matter so*, make it hard. For if it be just to punish such wickednes, is it unjust to intend to punish it? and to intend to punish it according to its desert, when it cannot be thought unjust, actually to render to men what they deserve?

We are, indeed, to account the *primary intention* of continuing the Gospel to such a people, among whom these live,

live, is *kindnes towards others*, not *this higher revenge upon them*; Yet nothing hinders but that *this revenge upon them*, may also be the fit matter of his *secondary intention*. For should he intend nothing concerning them? Is he to be so unconcern'd about his own creatures, that are under his Government? While things cannot fall out *to him unawares*, but that he hath this dismal event in prospect before him, he must at least *intend to let it be*, or not to hinder it. And who can expect he should? for, that his gracious influence towards them should, at length, cease, is above all exception: that it ceasing, while they live still under the Gospel, they contract deeper guilt, and incur heavier punishment, followes of course. And who can say he should *not intend to let it follow*? For should he take away the Gospel from the rest, that these might be less punished? that others *might not be saved*, because *they will not*?

Nor can he be obliged to interpose extraordinarily, and alter, for their sakes, the *course of nature*, and *providence*, so as either to hasten them the sooner

sooner out of the world, or cast them into any other part of it, where the Gospel is not, lest they should, by living still under it, be obnoxious to the severer punishment. For whither would this lead? he should, by equal reason, have been obliged to prevent mens sinning at all, that they might not be liable to any punishment. And so not to have made the world, or have otherwise framed the methods of his Government, and less suitably to an whole community of reasonable creatures; or to have made an end of the world long ago, and have quitted all his great designs in it, lest some should sin on, and incur proportionable punishment! or to have provided extraordinarily that all should do and fare alike; and that it might never have come to pass, that it should be less tolerable for *Capernaum*, and *Chorazin*, and *Bethsaida* than for *Tyre*, and *Sidon*, and *Sodom*, and *Gomorrhah*. But *is there unrighteousnes with God?* or *is he unrighteous in taking vengeance?* or *is he therefore unjust, because he will render to every one according to his works; to them who, by patient continu-*  
*ance*

ance in well doing, seek glory, honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousnes, indignation, and wrath, tribulation, and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile? Rom. 2. 6, 7, 8, 9. Doth righteousness it self make him unrighteous? O Sinner, understand how much better it is to avoid the stroke of divine justice, than accuse it! God will be found true, and every man a liar, that he may be justified when he speaks, and be clear when he judges. Psal. 51. 4.

6. Yet are we not to imagine any certain fixed rule, according whereto (except in the case of the unpardonable sin) the divine dispensation is measured in cases of this nature. viz. That, when a sinner hath contended just so long, or to such a degree, against his Grace and Spirit in his Gospel, he shall be finally rejected; or if but so long, or not to such a degree, he is yet certainly to be further try'd, or treated with. It is little to be doubted, but he puts forth the power of victorious grace, at length, upon some more obstinate, and obdu-



*obdurate sinners*, and that have longer  
 persisted in their rebellions; (not ha-  
 ving sin'd the unpardonable sin) and  
 gives over *some sooner*, as it seems good  
 unto him. Nor doth he herein owe  
 an account to any man of his mat-  
 ters. Here *Sovereign good pleasure rules*,  
 and arbitrates, that is ty'd to no cer-  
 tain rule. Neither, in these variations,  
 is there *any shew* of that blameable  
*negotiation*, or *accepting of persons*, which,  
 in his own word, he so expressly dis-  
 claims. We must distinguish *matters*  
*of right*, (even such as are so by pro-  
 mise only, as well as others) and  
*matters of meer unpromised favour*. In  
*matters of right*, to be an *accepter of*  
*persons*, is a thing most highly culpa-  
 ble *with men*, and which can have no  
 place *with the holy God*. i. e. When an  
*humane judge* hath his rule before him,  
 according whereto he is to estimate  
*mens rights, in judgment*; there, to re-  
 gard the person of the *rich*, or of the  
*poor* to the prejudice of the *justice of*  
*the cause*, were an insufferable iniqui-  
 ty; as it were also in a *private per-*  
*son* to withhold anothers *right*, because  
 he hath no *kindnes* for him. So even  
 the

the great God himself, tho' of *meer* grace, he first fix't and establish't the rule, (fitly therefore called the Covenant, or law of grace) by which he will proceed in pardoning, and justifying men, or in condemning, and holding them guilty, both *here*, and in the *final judgment*; Yet *having* fix't it, he will never recede from it; so as either to acquit an *impenitent unbeliever*, or condemn a *believing penitent*. If we *confess our sins*, he is faithful and just to *forgive*. None shall be ever able to accuse him of *breach of faith*, or of transgressing his own rules of justice. We find it therefore said in reference to the judgment of the last day, *when God shall render to every man according to his works, whether they be Jewes or Gentiles, that there is no respect of persons with God.* Rom. 2. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. yet (*qui promisit penitenti veniam, non promisit peccanti penitentiam,*) whereas he hath, by his Evangelical law, ascertain'd pardon to one that sincerely obeys it, but hath not *promised* grace to enable them to do so, to them that have long continued wilfully disobedient and rebellious, *this*

*this communication of grace is, therefore, left arbitrary, and to be dispensed, as the matter of free and unassured favour, as it seems him good. And indeed, if in matters of arbitrary favour, respect of persons ought to have no place, friendship were quite excluded the world, and would be swallowed up of strict and rigid justice. I ought to take all men for my friends alike, otherwise than as justice should oblige me to be more respectful to men of more merit.*

7. *Wherefore no man can certainly know, or ought to conclude, concerning himself, or others, as long as they live, that the season of grace is quite over with them. As we can conceive no rule God hath set to himself to proceed by, in ordinary cases of this nature; so nor is there any he hath set unto us to judge by, in this case. It were to no purpose, and could be of no use to men, to know so much; therefore it were unreasonable to expect God should have settled and declared any rule, by which they might come by the knowledge of it. As the case is then, viz. there being no such rule,*

no

no such thing can be concluded ; for who can tell what an *arbitrary, Sovereign, free Agent will do*, if he declare not his own purpose himself? How should it be known, when the Spirit of God hath been often working upon the soul of a man, that *this* or *that* shall be the *last act*, and that he will never put forth *another*? And why should God make it known? To the person himself whose case it is, 'tis manifest it could be no benefit. Nor is it to be thought the holy God will ever so alter the course of his own proceedings, but that it shall finally be seen to all the world, that *every mans destruction* was, entirely, and to the last, *of himself*. If God had made it *evident to a man*, that he were finally rejected, he were obliged to believe it. But shall it ever be said, God hath made any thing *a mans duty*, which were inconsistent with his *felicity*. The having *sinned* himself into such a condition wherein he is forsaken of God, is indeed inconsistent with it. And so the case is to stand, i. e. that his *perdition* be in immediate connection with his *sin*, not with his *duty*. As it would be



See more  
to this pur-  
pose in the  
Appendix.

in immediate, necessary connection with his duty, if he were bound to believe himself finally forsaken, and a lost creature. For that belief makes him hopeless, and a very devil, justifies his unbelief of the Gospel, towards himself, by removing and shutting up, towards him, the object of such a faith, and consequently brings the matter to this state, that he perishes, not because he doth not believe God reconcileable to man, but because, with particular application to himself, he ought not so to believe.

And it were most unfit, and of very pernicious consequence, that such a thing should be generally known concerning others. It were to anticipate the final Judgment, to create an Hell upon Earth, to tempt them whose doom were already known, to do all the mischief in the world, which malice and despair can suggest, and prompt them unto; it were to mingle devils with men! and fill the world with confusion! How should Parents know how to behave themselves towards Children, an Husband towards the Wife of his bosom in such a case, if it were known they were no more to counsel,

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exhort, admonish them, pray with or for them than if they were devils!

And if *there were such a rule*, how frequent misapplications would the fallible and disordered minds of men make of it? so that they would be apt to fancy themselves warranted to judge severely, or uncharitably, and (as the truth of the case perhaps is) unjustly concerning others, from which they are so hardly withheld, when they have no such pretence to embolden them to it, but are so strictly forbidden it. And the judgment-seat so fenced, as it is, by the most awful interdicts, against their usurpation and encroachments.

We are therefore to reverence the wisdom of the divine Government, that things of this nature are among the *arcana* of it; Some of those *secrets which belong not to us*. He hath revealed what was fit and necessary, for us and our children, and envies to man no useful knowledge.

But it may be said, when the Apostle (1 *Joh.* 5. 16.) directs to pray for a brother whom we see sinning a sin that is not unto death, and addes, *there*

is a sin unto death, I do not say he shall pray for it; Is it not imply'd that it may be known when one sins that sin unto death, not only to himself, but even to others too? I answer it is imply'd there may be too probable appearances of it, and much ground to suspect and fear it concerning some, in some cases; As when any against the highest evidence of the truth of the Christian Religion, and that Jesus is the Christ, or the Messiah (the proper and most sufficiently credible testimony whereof, he had mentioned in the foregoing verses, under heads to which the whole evidence of the truth of Christianity may be fitly enough reduced) do notwithstanding, from that malice, which blinds their understanding, persist in infidelity, or apostatize and relapse into it, from a former profession, there is great cause of suspicion, lest such have sinned that sin unto death. Whereupon yet it is to be observed, he doth not expressly forbid praying for the persons whose case we may doubt; only he doth not enjoin it, as he doth for others, but only saies, *I do not say ye shall pray for it*, i. e. that in his present

present direction to pray for others, he did not intend *such*, but another sort, for whom they might pray remotely from any such suspicion; *viz.* that he meant *now* such praying as ought to be interchanged between Christian friends, that have reason, in the main, to be well perswaded concerning one another. In the meantime intending no opposition to what is elsewhere enjoined, the praying for *all men*. 1 Tim. 2. 1. Without the personal exclusion of any, as also our Lord himself prayed *indefinitely* for his most malicious enemies, *Father forgive them they know not what they do*; tho he had formerly said, there was such a sin as should never be forgiven; Whereof 'tis highly probable some of them were guilty: yet *such* he doth not expressly except; but his prayer being in the indefinite, not the universal form, 'tis to be supposed it must mean *such as were within the compass and reach of prayer*, and capable of benefit by it. Nor doth the Apostle here direct personally to exclude any, only that indefinitely and in the general *such* must be supposed *not meant* as had *sinn'd*



the sin unto death; or must be conditionally excluded, if they had, without determining who had, or had not. To which purpose it is very observable, that a more abstract form of expression, is used in this latter clause of this verse. For whereas in the former positive part of the direction, he enjoyns praying for him, or them that had not sinn'd unto death (*viz.* concerning whom there was no ground for any such imagination or suspicion that they had;) In the negative part, concerning such as might have sinn'd it, he doth not say for him or them, but for it, (*i. e.* concerning, or in reference to it,) as if he had said, the case in general only is to be excepted; and if persons are to be distinguisht (since every sin is some ones Sin, the sin of some person or other) let God distinguish, but do not you, 'tis enough for you to except the sin, committed by whomsoever. And tho' the former part of the verse speaks of a particular person, If a man see his brother sin a sin that is not unto death, which is as determinate to a person as the sight of our eye can be, it doth not follow the

the latter part must suppose a like particular determination of any persons case, that he hath sin'd it. I may have great reason to be confident such and such have not, when I can only suspect that such a one hath. And it is a thing much less unlikely to be certain to one self than another, for they that have sin'd unto death, are no doubt so blinded and stupify'd by it, that they are not more apt or competent to observe themselves, and consider their case than others may be.

8. But tho' none ought to conclude that their day or season of grace is quite expired, yet they ought deeply to apprehend the danger lest it should expire, before their necessary work be done, and their peace made. For tho' it can be of no use to them to know the former, and therefore they have no means appointed them by which to know it, 'tis of great use to apprehend the latter; and they have sufficient ground for the apprehension. All the cautions and warnings wherewith the holy Scripture abounds, of the kind with those already mentioned, have that manifest

design. And nothing can be more important, or apposite to this purpose, than that solemn charge of the great Apostle. *Phil. 2. 12. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; considered together with the subjoyned ground of it vers. 13. For it is God that worketh in you to will, and to do, of his own good pleasure.* How correspondent is the one with the other; work, for he works; there were no working at all to any purpose, or with any hope, if he did not work. And work with fear and trembling, for he works of his own good pleasure, q. d. 'Twere the greatest folly imaginable to trifle with one that works at so perfect liberty, under no obligation, that may desist when he will; to impose upon so absolutely Sovereign, and arbitrary an agent, that owes you nothing; and from whose former gracious operations not comply'd with, you can draw no argument unto any following ones, *that because he doth, therefore he will.* As there is no certain connection between present time, and future, but all time is made up of undepending, not-strictly-coherent moments,

moments, so as no man can be sure, because *one* now exists, *another* shall; There is also no more certain connection between the arbitrary acts of a free Agent *within such time*; so that I cannot be sure, because he now darts in light upon me, is now convincing me, now awakening me, therefore he will still do so, again and again. Upon this ground then, what exhortation could be more proper than this, *work out your salvation with fear and trembling*? What could be more awfully monitory, and enforcing of it, than *that he works only of meer good will and pleasure*? How should I tremble to think, if I should be negligent, or undutiful, he may give out the next moment, and let the work fall, and me perish!

And there is more especial cause for such an apprehension, upon the concurrence of such things as these,

1. If the workings of Gods Spirit upon the soul of a man have been more than ordinarily strong and urgent, and do now cease. If there have been more powerful convictions, deeper humiliations, more awakened fears,  
more



more formed purposes of a new life, more fervent desires, that are now all vanished and fled, and the sinner is returned to his old dead, and dull temper.

2. If there be no disposition to reflect and consider the difference, no sense of his loss, but he apprehends such workings of spirit in him unnecessary troubles to him, and thinks it well he is delivered and eased of them.

3. If in the time when he was under such workings of spirit, he had made known his case to his Minister, or any godly friend, whose company he now shuns, as not willing to be put in mind; or hear any more of such matters.

4. If hereupon he hath more indulged sensual inclination, taken more liberty, gone against the checks of his own conscience, broken former good resolutions, involv'd himself in the guilt of any grosser sins.

5. If conscience, so baffled, be now silent; lets him alone, grows more sluggish and weaker (which it must) as his lusts grow stronger.

6. If

6. If the same lively powerful ministry, which before affected him much, now moves him not.

7. If especially, he is grown into a dislike of such preaching, if serious godlines; and what tends to it are become distastfull to him, if discourses of God, and Christ, of death and judgment, and of an holy life, are reckon'd superfluous and needles, are unfavoury and disrelisht; if he have learned to put disgraceful names upon things of this import, and the persons that most value them, and live accordingly. If he hath taken the seat of the scorner, and makes it his business to deride, what he had once a reverence for, or took some complacency in.

8. If, upon all this, God withdraw such a Ministry, so that he is now warn'd, and admonisht, exhorted and striven with as formerly, no more. O, the fearful danger of that mans case! Hath he no cause to fear lest the things of his peace should be for ever hid from his eyes? Surely he hath much cause of *fear*, but not of *despair*. *Fear* would in this case be his *great duty*,

*duty*, and might yet prove the means of saving him; *Despair* would be his very hainous and *destroying sin*. If yet he would be stirr'd up to consider his case, whence he is fall'n, and whither he is falling, and set himself to serious seeking of God, cast down himself before him, abase himself, cry for mercy, as for his life, there is yet hope in his case. God may make here an instance what he can obtain of himself to do for a perishing wretch! But

IV. *If with any that have liv'd under the Gospel, their day is quite expired, and the things of their peace now for ever hid from their eyes, this is in it self a most deplorable case, and much lamented by our Lord Jesus himself.*

That the case is in it self most deplorable, who sees not? A soul lost! a creature capable of God! upon its way to him! near to the Kingdom of God! shipwrack't in the Port! O sinner, from how high an hope art thou fall'n! into what depths of misery and wo!

*And that it was lamented by our Lord, is in the Text. He beheld the City,* (very generally, we have reason to apprehend, inhabited by such wretched

ed creatures ) and *wept over it*. This was very affectionate lamentation; we lament often, very heartily, many a sad case, for which we do not shed tears. But *tears, such tears*, falling from *such eyes* ! the issues of the purest, and best govern'd passion that ever was, shew'd the *true greatness of the Cause*. Here could be no exorbitancy or unjust excess, nothing more than was proportionable to the occasion. There needs no other proof that this is a sad case, than that *our Lord lamented it with tears*, which that he did, we are plainly told, so that touching that, there is no place for doubt. All that is liable to question is, *whether we are to conceive in him any like resentments of such cases, in his present glorify'd state* ?

Indeed we cannot think Heaven, a place or state of sadness, or lamentation ; and must take heed of conceiving any thing there, *especially on the throne of glory*, unsuitable to the most perfect nature, and the most glorious state. We are not to imagine tears there ; which in that happy region are wip'd away from inferiour eyes ;



eyes; no grief, sorrow, or sighing, which are all fled away, and shall be no more. As there can be no other turbid passion of any kind. But when expressions that import *anger*, or *grief*, are used, even concerning God himself, we must sever in our conception, every thing of *imperfection*, and ascribe every thing of *real perfection*. We are not to think such expressions signify *nothing*, that they have no meaning, or that nothing at all is to be attributed to him under them.

Nor are we again to think they signify the same thing with what we find in our selves, and are wont to express by those names. In the divine nature, there may be *real*, and yet *most serene complacency*, and *displeacency*, viz. that are unaccompany'd with the least commotion, and that import nothing of imperfection, but perfection rather, as it is a perfection to apprehend things *substantially* to what in themselves they are. The holy Scriptures frequently speak of God as *angry*, and *griev'd* for the *sins of men*, and their *miseries* which ensue therefrom. And a *real aversion* and *dislike* is signify'd thereby, and by many

many other expressions, which in us, would signify *vehement* agitations of affection, that we are sure can have no place in him. We ought therefore in our own thoughts to ascribe to him that *calm aversion of will*, in reference to the sins, and miseries of men in general; and, in our own apprehensions, to remove to the utmost distance from him, all such agitations of passion or affection, even tho' some expressions that occur, carry a great appearance thereof, should they be understood according to humane measures, as they are humane forms of speech. As (to instance in what is said by the glorious God himself, and very near in sense to what we have in the Text) what can be more *pathetick*, than that *lamenting wish*, Psal. 81. 13. *O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my wayes!*

But we must take heed lest, under the pretence that we cannot ascribe every thing to God that such expressions seem to import, we therefore ascribe nothing. We ascribe nothing, if we do not ascribe to him a *real unwillingnes* that men should sin on, and

and perish; and consequently a *real* willingness that they should *turn to him, and live*; which so many plain Texts assert. And therefore it is unavoidably impos'd upon us, to believe that God is *truly unwilling* of some things, which he doth not think fit to interpose his omnipotency to hinder, and is *truly willing* of some things, which he doth not put forth his omnipotency to effect. That he most fitly makes this the ordinary course of his dispensations towards men, to govern them by lawes, and promises, and threatnings (made *most express* to them that live under the Gospel) to work upon their minds, their hope, and their fear, affording them the ordinary assistences of Supernatural light and influence, with which he requires them to comply, and which, upon their refusing to do so, he may most righteously withhold, and give them the victory to their own ruine, tho oftentimes, he doth, from a *sovereignty of grace*, put forth that *greater power* upon others, equally negligent and obstinate, not to enforce, but effectually to incline their wills, and gain

a victory over them, to their salvation.

Nor is *his will* towards the rest *altogether ineffectual*, tho it have not *this effect*. For whosoever thou art that livest under the Gospel, tho thou dost not know that God so *wills thy conversion and salvation*, as to effect it, whatsoever resistance thou now makest; though thou art not sure he will finally overcome all thy resistance, and pluck thee as a *firebrand* out of the mouth of hell; yet thou canst not say his *good will towards thee* hath been without *any effect at all tending thereto*. He hath often call'd upon thee in his Gospel, to repent and turn to him through Christ; he hath waited on thee with long patience, and given thee time and space of repentance; he hath within that time, been often at work with thy soul. Hath he not many times let in beams of light upon thee? shewn thee the evil of thy wayes? convinc't thee? awakened thee? half-perswaded thee? and thou never had'st reason to doubt, but that if thou hadst set thy self with serious diligence to *work out thy own*

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*salvation, he would have wrought on, so as to have brought things to a blessed issue for thy soul.*

*Thou mightest discern his mind towards thee to be agreeable to his word, wherein he hath testified to thee he desired not the death of sinners, that he hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, or in the death of the wicked, but that he should turn and live, exhorted thee, expostulated with thee, and others in thy condition, turn ye, turn ye, why will ye dy? he hath told thee expressly thy stubbornnes, and contending against him, did grieve him, and vex his spirit, that thy sin, wherein thou hast indulg'd thy self, hath been an abomination to him, that it was the abominable thing which his soul hated, that he was broken with the whorish heart of such as thou, and prest therewith, as a cart that was full of sheaves.*

*Now such expressions as these, tho they are borrowed from man, and must be understood fitably to God, tho they do not signifie the same thing with him, as they do in us, yet they do not signifie nothing. As when*  
hands

*hands and eyes* are attributed to God, they do not signifie as they do with us, yet they signifie somewhat correspondent, as *active*, and *visive power*: So these expressions, tho they signifie not, in God, such unquiet motions and passions, as they would in us, they do signifie a *mind and will*, really, tho with the most perfect *calmness and tranquility*, set against sin, and the horrid consequences of it, which yet, for greater reasons than we can understand, he may not see fit to do all he can to prevent.

And if we know not how to reconcile *such a will in God*, with some of our notions concerning the *divine nature*; shall we, for *what we have thought of him*, deny what he hath so expressly said of himself, or pretend to understand his nature better than he himself doth? †

† See the Appendix.

And when we see from such expresse sayings in Scripture, reduced to a sense becoming God, how *God's mind* stands in reference to sinners, and their self-destroying wayes, we may thence apprehend what temper of mind our *Lord Jesus* also bears towards them in

H 2

the

the like case, even in his glorify'd state. For can you think there is a disagreement between him and the Father about these things?

And whereas we find our blessed Lord, in the dayes of his flesh, one while complaining *men would not come to him that they might have life*, Joh. 5. 40. *elsewhere griev'd at the hardnes of their hearts*, Mark. 3. 5. and here scattering tears over sinning and perishing Jerusalem; we cannot doubt but that *the (innocent) perturbation*, which his earthly state did admit, being sever'd, *his mind* is still the same, in reference to *cases of the same nature*; for can we think there is a disagreement between him, and himself? We cannot therefore doubt but that,

1. *He distinctly comprehends the truth of any such case.* He beholds from the throne of his glory above, all the treaties which are held and manag'd with sinners in his name, and and what their deportments are therein. *His eyes are as a flame of fire*, where-with he *searches hearts, and trieth reins*. He hath seen therefore, sinner, all along, every time an offer of grace hath been

been made to thee, and been rejected; when thou hast slighted counsels, and warnings that have been given thee, exhortations and intreaties that have been prest upon thee, for many years together, and how thou hast hardened thy heart against reproofs, and threatnings, against promises and allurements; and beholds the tendency of all this, what is like to come of it, and that, if thou persist, it will be bitterness in the end.

2. *That he hath a real dislike of the sinfulness of thy course.* It is not indifferent to him whether thou obeyest, or disobeyest the Gospel; whether thou turn, and repent or no; that he is truly displeased at thy trifling, sloth, negligence, impenitency, hardness of heart, stubborn obstinacy, and contempt of his grace, and takes real offence at them.

3. *He hath real kind propensions towards thee,* and is ready to receive thy returning soul, and effectually to mediate with the offended Majesty of heaven for thee, as long as there is any hope in thy case.

4. *When he sees there is no hope, he*

H 3

pities



pities thee, while thou see'st it not, and dost not pity thy self. *Pity and mercy above are not names only; 'tis a great reality that is signified by them, and that hath place there, in far higher excellency, and perfection, than it can with us poor mortals here below. Ours is but borrowed, and participated from that first fountain, and original above. Thou dost not perish unlamented, even with the purest heavenly pity, tho' thou hast made thy case incapable of remedy. As the well-tempered Judge bewails the sad end of the Malefactor, whom justice obliges him not to spare, or save.*

And now let us consider what use is to be made of all this.

And tho' nothing can be useful to the persons themselves, whom the Redeemer thus laments as lost, yet that he doth so, may be of great use to others.

Use.

Use. Which will partly concern those who do justly apprehend this is not their case; And partly such as may be in great fear that it is.

I. For such as have reason to persuade

*swade themselves it is not their case. The best ground upon which any can confidently conclude this, is that they have in this their present day, thorough the grace of God, already effectually known the things of their peace, such, viz. as have sincerely, with all their hearts and souls turned to God, taken him to be their God, and devoted themselves to him, to be his. Entrusting and subjecting themselves to the saving mercy, and governing power of the Redeemer, according to the tenour of the Gospel-Covenant, from which they do not find their hearts to swerve or decline, but resolve, thorough divine assistance, to persevere herein all their daies.*

Now for such as with whom things are already brought to that comfortable conclusion, I only say to them,

*1. Rejoyce and blesse God that so it is. Christ your Redeemer rejoyces with you, and over you; you may collect it from his contrary resentment of their case who are past hope; if he weep over them, he, no doubt, rejoyces over you. There is joy in heaven concerning you. Angels rejoyce, your glorious Redeemer presiding in the joyful*

comfort. And should not you rejoyce for your selves? Consider what a discrimination is made in your case! To how many hath that Gospel been a *deadly savour*, which hath proved a *savour of life unto life to you!* How many have fal'n *on your right hand, and your left, stumbling at that stone of offence*, which to you is become the *head-stone of the corner, elect, and precious!* Whence is this difference? Did you never slight Christ? never make light of offered mercy? was your mind never blind or vain? was your heart never hard or dead? were the terms of peace and reconciliation never rejected or disregarded by you? How should you admire victorious grace, that would never desist from striving with you till it had overcome! You are the triumph of the Redeemers conquering love, who might have been of his wrath and justice! endeavour your spirits may *tast*, more and more, the *sweetnes of reconciliation*, that you may more abound in joy and praises. Is it not pleasant to you to be at peace with God? to find that all controversies are taken up between him and

and you? that you can now approach him, and his terrours not make you afraid! that you can enter into the secret of his presence, and solace your selves in his assured favour and love! How should you joy in God through Jesus Christ, by whom you have received the atonement! What have you now to fear? If, when you were enemies, you were reconcil'd by the death of Christ, how much more, being reconciled, shall you be saved by his life? How great a thing have you to oppose to all worldly troubles? If God be for you, who can be against you! Think how mean it is for the friends of God, the favourites of heaven, to be dismay'd at the appearances of danger that threatens them from the inhabitants of the earth! what if all the world were in a posture of hostility against you, when the mighty Lord of all is your friend? Take heed of thinking meanly of his power and love! would any one diminish to himself, whom he takes for his God? All people will walk, every one in the name of his God; why should not you much more in the name of yours, glorying in him?



him, and making your boasts of him all the day long? O the reproach which is cast upon the glorious name of the great God, by their diffidence and despondency, who visibly stand in special relation to him, but fear the impotent malice of mortal man more than they can trust in his almighty love! If indeed you are justify'd by faith, and have peace with God, it becomes you so to rejoyce in the hope of the glory of God, as also to glory in tribulation, and tell all the world that in his favour stands your life, and that you care not who is displeased with you, for the things, wherewith, you have reason to apprehend, he is pleased.

2. Demean your selves with that care, caution, and dutifulness that become a state of reconciliation. Bethink your selves that your present peace and friendship with God is not original, and continued from thence, but hath been interrupted and broken; that your peace is not that of constantly innocent persons. You stand not in this good and happy state because you never offended, but as being reconcil'd, and who, therefore, were once enemies. And when you

you were brought to know, in that your day, which you have enjoy'd, the things belonging to your peace, you were made to feel the smart, and taste the bitterness of your having been alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works. When the Terrours of God did beset you round, and his arrows stuck fast in you, did you not then find trouble and sorrow? were you not in a fearful expectation of wrath and fiery indignation to consume and burn you up as adversaries? Would you not then have given all the world for a peaceful word or look? for any glimmering hope of peace? How wary and afraid should you be of a new breach! How should you study acceptable deportments, and to walk worthy of God unto all well-pleasing! How strictly careful should you be to keep faith with him, and abide stedfast in his Covenant? How concern'd for his interest! and in what agonies of spirit, when you behold the eruptions of enmity against him from any others! not from any distrust, or fear of final prejudice to his interest, but from the apprehension of the unrighteousness of the thing

*thing it self, and a dutiful love to his name, throne, and Government. How zealous should you be to draw in others? how fervent in your endeavours, within your own sphere, and how large in your desires, extended as far as the sphere of the universe, that every knee might bow to him, and every tongue confes to him. They ought to be more deeply concern'd for his righteous cause, that remember they were once most unrighteously ingaged against it. And ought besides to be fill'd with compassion towards the souls of men, yet in an unreconciled state, as having known the terrours of the Lord, and remembering the experienced dismalnes and horror of that state; what it was to have divine wrath and justice arm'd against you with almighty power! And to have heard the thunder of such a voice, I lift my hand to heaven, and swear I live for ever, if I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on vengeance, I will recompence fury to mine adversaries, vengeance to mine enemies.— Do you not know what the case is like to be, when potsherds, that should strive but with the*

the portberds of the earth, venture to oppose themselves as antagonists to omnipotency? And when briars and thorns set themselves in battel array against a consuming fire, how easily it can passe through, and devour, and burn them up together? And how much more fearful is their condition that know it not! but are ready to rush like the horse into the battel! Do you owe no duty, no pity to them that have the same nature with you, and with whom your case was once the same? If you do indeed know the things of your peace Godward, so as to have made your peace, to have come to an agreement, and struck a Covenant with him; you have now taken his side, are of his confederates (not as equals but subjects.) You have sworn allegiance to him, and associated your self with all them that have done so. There can hereupon be but one common Interest to him and you. Hence therefore you are most strictly obliged to wish well to that interest, and promote it to your uttermost, in his own way, i. e. according to his openly avowed inclination, and design, and the genuine constitution



*stitution of that Kingdom* which he hath erected, and is intent to enlarge and extend further in the world. *That* you do well know, is a *Kingdom of grace*; for his natural Kingdom already confines with the universe, and can have no enlargement, without enlarging the creation. Whosoever they are that contend against him, are not *meerly enemies*, therefore, but *rebels*. And you see he aims to conquer them by *love and goodnes*; and therefore *treats* with them, and seeks to establish a Kingdom over them, *in and by a Mediatour*, who, if he were not intent upon the same design, had never lamented the destruction of any of them, and wept over their ruine, as here you find. So *therefore*, should you long for the *conversion of souls*, and the enlargement of his Kingdom this way, both out of *loyalty to him*, and *compassion towards them*.

2. For *such as may be in great fear*, lest this prove to be their case. They are either such as *may fear it*, but do not; or such as are *deeply afflicted with this actual fear*.

1. For the former sort, who are in

too great danger of bringing themselves into this dreadful deplorable condition, but apprehend nothing of it. All that is to be said to them *apart by themselves*, is only to *awaken them out of their drowsie, dangerous slumber, and security*; and then they will be capable of being spoken to, *together with the other sort*. Let me therefore

I. Demand of you; Do you believe there is a Lord over you, yea or no? *use your thoughts*, for, about matters that concern you less, *you can think*. Do you not apprehend you have an invisible *owner*, and *Ruler*, that rightfully claims to himself an interest in you, and a governing power over you? How came you into being? You know you made not yourselves. And if you yet look no higher, than to *progenitors of your own kind*, mortal men, as you are; how came they into being? You have so much understanding about you, if you would use it, as to know they could none of them make themselves more than you, and that therefore, *humane race* must have had its beginning, from *some superiour maker*.

And

And did not he that made them make you and all things else? where are your arguments to prove it was otherwise, and that this world, and all the generations of men took beginning of themselves, without a wise, and mighty Creatour? produce your *strong reasons*, upon which you will venture your souls, and all the possibilites of your being happy, or miserable to eternity! Will your *imagination* make you safe? and protect you against *his wrath* and *justice*, whose *authority* you will not own? Can you, *by it*, uncreate your Creatour, and nullify the eternal Being? or have you any thing else, *besides your own blind imagination*, to make you confident, that all things came of nothing, without any Maker? But if you know not how to think this reasonable, and apprehend you must allow your selves to owe your being to an almighty Creatour, let me

2. Ask of you how you think your life is maintained? Doth not he that made you live, keep you alive? Whereas you have often heard that *we all live, and move, and have our beings*

*beings in him*, doth it not seem *most likely* to you to be so? Have you the power of your own life? Do you think you can live as long as you will? At least do you not find you need the common helps of meat, and drink, and air, and clothing for the support and comfort of your lives? And are not all these his creatures as well as you? And can you have them, whether he will or no?

3. And how can you think that he that made and maintains you, hath no *right to rule you*? If it were possible any one should as much depend *upon you*, would you not claim such power over him? Can you suppose your selves to be under no obligation to please him, who hath done so much for you? and to do his will, if you can any way know it?

4. And can you pretend you have no means to know it? That book that goes up and down under the name of his Word, can you disprove it to be his Word? If such writings should now first come into the world, so sincere, so awful, so holy, so heavenly, bearing so expressly the *divine*  
I *Image,*



*Image*, avowing themselves to be from God, and the most wonderful works are wrought to prove them his Word, the *deaf made to hear*, the *blind to see*, the *dumb to speak*, the *sick healed*, the *dead raised*, by a word only commanding it to be so, would you not confesse this to be *sufficient evidence* that this revelation came from heaven. And are you not sufficiently assured they are so confirm'd? Do you find in your selves any inclination to cheat your children, in any thing that concerns their well being? Why should you more suspect your forefathers design, to cheat you in the meer reporting falsely, a matter of fact? was not humane nature the same, so many hundred years ago? Did ever the enemies of the Christian name, in the earlier dayes of Christianity, when it was but a novelty in the world, and as much hated, and endeavoured to be rooted out, as ever any Profession was, deny such matters of fact? Have not some of the most spiteful of them confest it? Did not Christians then willingly sacrifice their lives by multitudes, upon the assured truth of these things?

things? Have they not been ever since most strictly careful to preserve these writings, and transmit them, as wherein the all of themselves, and their Posterity was contained? And where is now your *new light*? where are your *later discoveries*, upon which, so many ages after, you are able to evict these writings of falshood, or dare venture to disbelieve them?

5. But if you believe these writings to be divine, how expresly is it told you, in them, *what the state of your case is Godward*, and what he requires of you? You may see *you have displeased him*, and *how you are to please him*, as hath been shewn before in this discourse. You know that you have lived in the world mindless, and inobservant of him, not trusting, fearing, loving, or delighting in him, declining his acquaintance and converse; seeking your own pleasure, following your inclination, doing your own will, as if you were supream, never minding to refer your actions to his *precepts as your rule*, or to his *glory as your end*. And from that word of his you may understand all this to be *very displeasing*.

*displeasing to him.* And that you can never please him by continuing this course, but by breaking it off, and returning to him as your Lord, and your God. That since your case did need a *redeemer, and reconciler,* and he hath provided and appointed one for you; you are to apply your selves to him, to commit and subject your souls to him, to *trust in his merits, and blood,* and *submit to his Authority, and Government.* And

6. Are you not *continually call'd* hereto by the Gospel, under which you have liv'd all this while? so that you are in *actual, continual rebellion* against him all the while you comply not with *this call*; Every breath you draw is rebellious breath. There is no moment wherein *this lies not upon you,* by every moments addition to your time. And that *patience* of his which addes by moments to your life, and should lead you to *repentance,* is, while you repent not, perverted by you, only to the *treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of his righteous judgment.*

7. And do you not find, as his  
word

word also plainly tells you, a great averſenes and diſinclination in you to any ſuch ſerious, ſolemn applying your ſelf to him, and your Redeemer? Try your own hearts; Do you not find them draw back and recoil; if you urge them, do they not ſtill fly off? How loath are you to retire! and ſet your ſelves to conſider your caſe! and unto ſerious ſeeking of God in Chriſt! both from a *reluctancy*, and indiſpoſition to *any ſuch employment as this is it ſelf*; and from diſaffection to *that whereto it tends*, the breaking off your former ſinful courſe of life, and entring upon a better. And does not all this ſhew you the plain truth of what the word of God hath told you, *that the Æthiopian may as ſoon change his ſkin, or the Leopard his ſpots, as they do good, who are accuſtom'd to do evil.* Jer. 13. 23. that you have an heart that cannot repent, Rom. 2. 5. *till God give you repentance to life,* Act. 11. 11. *That you cannot come to Chriſt till the father draw you,* Joh. 6. 44. Do you not ſee your caſe then? that you muſt periſh if you have not help from heaven? If



God do not give you *his* grace, to overcome, and cure the averſenes and malignity of *your* nature? that things are likely thus to run on with you as they have from day to day, and from year to year; and you that are unwilling to take the courſe that is neceſſary for your ſalvation to day, are likely to be as unwilling to morrow, and ſo your lives conſume in vanity, till you drop into perdition? But

8. Doſt thou not alſo know, ſinner, ( what hath been ſo newly ſhewn thee from Gods word ) that, by thy being under the Goſpel, thou haſt a day of grace? Not only as offers of pardon and reconciliation are made to thee in it, but alſo as thorough it, converting heart-renewing grace is to be expected, and may be had? that what is ſufficient for the turning and changing of thy heart, is uſually not given all at once, but as gentler inſinuations ( the injection of ſome good thoughts and deſires ) are comply'd with, more powerful influences may be hoped to follow? That therefore thou art concern'd, upon any ſuch thought

thought cast into thy mind, of going now to seek God for the life of thy soul, to strive, *thy self*, against thy own disinclination; that if thou do not, but yield to it, and still defer, it may prove mortal to thee? For is it not plain to thee in it self, and from what hath been said, that this day hath its limits, and will come to an end? Dost thou not know thou art a mortal creature, that thy breath is in thy nostrils? Dost thou know how near thou art to the end of thy life? and how few breaths there may be for thee between this present moment and eternity? Dost thou not know thy day of grace may end before thy life end? that thou may'st be cast far enough out of the sound of the Gospel? and if thou shouldst carry any notices of it with thee, thou who hast been so unapt to consider them, while they were daily prest upon thee, will most probably be less apt when thou hearest of no such thing? that thou may'st live still under the Gospel, and the Spirit of grace retire from thee, and never attempt thee more for thy former despiting of it? For what obliga-

tion hast thou upon that blessed Spirit? Or why should'st thou think a Deity bound to attend upon thy triflings? And

9. If yet all this move not: Consider what it will be to dye *unreconciled to God!* Thou hast been his enemy, he hath made thee gracious offers of peace, waited long upon thee, thou hast made light of all. The matter must at length end either in *reconciliation*, or *vengeance!* The former is not acceptable to thee, art thou prepared for the latter? Can'st thou sustain it? Is it not a *fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God?* Thou wilt not *do him right*, he must then *right himself* upon thee; Dost thou think he cannot do it? Canst thou doubt his power? Cast thine eyes about thee, behold the greatness (as far as thou canst) of this creation of his, whereof thou art but a very little part. He that hath made that Sun over thine head, and stretch't out those spacious heavens, that hath furnisht them with those innumerable bright stars, that governs all their motions, that hath hung this earth upon nothing,

nothing, that made and sustains that great variety of creatures that inhabit it, can he not deal with thee? a worm? *Can thine heart endure, or thine hands be strong* if he plead with thee? if he surround thee with his terrors, and set them in battel array against thee? *Hell and destruction are open before him, and without covering*, how soon art thou cast in and ingulphed? Sit down, and consider whether thou be able, *with thy impotency*, to stand before him, that comes against thee with *Almighty power*! Is it not better to sue in time for peace?

But perhaps thou may'st say I begin now to fear it is too late, I have so long slighted the Gospel, resisted the holy Spirit of God, abus'd, and baffled my own light, and conscience, that I am afraid God will quite abandon me, and cast me off for ever. It is well if thou do indeed begin to fear. That fear gives hope. Thou art then capable of coming into their rank who are next to be spoken to, viz.

2. Such as feel themselves afflicted with the apprehension, and dread of  
their



their having out-liv'd their day, and that the things of their peace are now irrecoverably hid from their eyes. I desire to counsel such faithfully, according to that light and guidance which the Gospel of our Lord affords us in reference to any such case.

1. *Take heed of stifling that fear suddenly, but labour to improve it to some advantage, and then to cure and remove it by rational-evangelical means and methods.* Do not as thou lovest the life of thy soul, go about suddenly, or by undue means, to smother or extinguish it. 'Tis too possible, when any such apprehension strikes into a mans mind, because 'tis a sharp or piercing thought, disturbs his quiet, gives him molestation, and some torture, to pluck out the dart too soon, and cast it away. Perhaps such a course is taken, as doth him unspeakably more mischief, than a thousand such thoughts would ever do. He diverts, it may be, to vain company, or to sensuality, talks, or drinks away his trouble; makes death his cure of pain, and to avoid the fear of hell, leaps into it. Is this indeed the wisest

lest course? Either thy apprehension is reasonable, or unreasonable. If it should prove a reasonable apprehension, as it is a terrible one, would the neglect of it become a reasonable creature, or mend thy case? if it shall be found unreasonable, it may require time, and some debate to discover it to be so; whereby, when it is manifestly detected, with how much greater satisfaction is it laid aside! Labour then to enquire rightly concerning this matter.

2. In this enquiry, consider diligently what the kind of that fear is that you find your selves afflicted with. The fear that perplexes your heart, must some way correspond to the apprehension you have in your mind, touching your case. Consider what *that* is, and, in what form, it shews it self there. Doth it appear in the form of a *peremptory judgment*, a *definitive sentence*, which you have past within your self concerning your case; that your day is over, and you are a lost creature; or only of a *meer doubt*, lest it should prove so. The fear that corresponds to the former of these, makes you quite desperate, and obstinately resolute against any

any means for the bettering of your condition. The *fear* that answers to *the latter* apprehension, hath a mixture of *hope* in it, which admits of somewhat to be done for your relief, and will prompt thereunto. Labour to discern which of these is the present temper and posture of your spirit.

3. If you find it be the former; let no thought any longer dwell in your mind [under that form] viz. as a definitive sentence concerning your state. You have nothing to do to pass such a judgment, the tendency of it is dismal, and horrid, as you may, your self, perceive. And your ground for it is none at all. Your conscience within you is to do the office of a Judge; but only of an *under-Judge*, that is to proceed strictly by rule, prescribed, and set by the sovereign Lord, and arbiter of life and death, there is one *Lam-giver* who is able to save, and to destroy. Nor is your Conscience, as an *under-Judge*, to meddle at all, but in cases within your cognisance. This about your final state is a reserv'd, excepted case, belonging only to the *supream tribunal*, which you must take heed

heed how you usurp. As such a judgment tends to make you desperate, so there will be high *presumption* in this *despair*. Dare you take upon you to cancell, and nullify *to your self* the obligation of the Evangelical law? and whereas that makes it *your duty* to *repent, and believe the Gospel*, to absolve your self from this bond, and say, it is none of your duty, or make it impossible to you to do it? you have matter and cases enough within the cognisance of your conscience, not only the particular actions of your life, but your *present state* also, whether you be as yet in a state of acceptance with God, thorough Christ, yea or no? And here you have rules set you to judge by. But concerning your *final state*, or that *you shall never be brought into a state of acceptance*, you have no rule by which *you can make* such a judgment; and therefore this judgment belongs not to you. Look then upon the matter of your *final condition*, as an *exempt case*, reserv'd to the future judgment, and the present determination whereof, against your self, is without your compass and line,  
and



and most unsutable to the state of probation, wherein, you are to reckon, God continues you here, with the rest of men in this world; and therefore any such judgment you should tear, and reverse, and, as such, not permit to have any place with you.

4. Yet since, as hath been said, you are not quite to reject, or obliterate any apprehension, or thought touching this subject, make it your business to correct, and reduce it to that other form, i. e. let it only for the present remain with you, as a doubt how your case now stands, and what issue it may at length have. And see that your fear thereupon be answerable to your apprehension, so rectify'd. While as yet it is not evident, you have made your peace with God, upon his known terms, you are to consider God hath left your case a doubtful case, and you are to conceive of it accordingly. And are to entertain a fear concerning it, not as certainly hopeles, but as uncertain. And as yours is really a doubtful case, 'tis a most important one. It concerns your Souls, and your eternal well-being, and is not therefore to be neglected, or tri-

sted

fled with. You do not know how God will deal with you; Whether he will again afford you such help as he hath done, or whether ever he will effectually move your heart unto conversion and salvation. You therefore are to *work out your salvation with fear and trembling*, because (as was told you) *he works, but of his own good pleasure*. Your fear should not exceed this state of your case, so as to *exclude hope*. It is of unspeakable concernment to you, that *hope* do intermingle with your *fear*. *That* will do much to mollify and soften your hearts, that after all the abuse of mercy, and imposing upon the patience of God, your neglects and flights of a bleeding Saviour, your resisting and grieving the Spirit of grace, he *may* yet, once for all, visit your forlorn Soul with his vital influence, and save you from going down to perdition! How can your hearts but melt and break upon this apprehension! And it is not a groundless one. He that *came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, will not fail to treat them well, whom he sees beginning to listen to his call,  
and

and entertaining the thoughts that most directly tend to bring them to a compliance with it. Your hope insinuating it self and mingling with your fear, is highly grateful to the God of all grace. *He takes pleasure in them that fear him, and in them that hope in his mercy.* Psal. 147. 11.

5. But see to it also that your fear be not slight, and momentary, and that it vanish not, while as yet it hath so great a work to do in you, viz. to engage you to accept Gods own terms of peace and reconciliation, with all your heart and soul. It is of continual use, even not only *in order to conversion*, but to the converted also. Can you think those mentioned words were spoken to none such, *Phil. 2. 12; 13?* Or those, *Heb. 4. 1. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short, &c.* And do we not find an holy fear is to contribute all along to the whole of progressive sanctification? *2 Cor. 7. 1. Having therefore these promises (dearly beloved) let us cleanse our selves from all filthines of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holines*

holines in the fear of God. And that  
 by it he preserves his own, that they  
 never depart from him. *offer. 32. 40.*  
 Much more do you need it in your  
 present case, while matters are yet in  
 treaty between God and you. And  
 as it should not exceed the true ap-  
 prehension of your case, so nor should  
 it come short of it. *Isa. 6. 10.*  
 You should therefore, in order here-  
 to, aggravate to your selves the just cau-  
 ses of your fear. Why are you afraid  
 your day should be over, and the  
 things of your peace be for ever hid  
 from your eyes? Is it not that you  
 have sinn'd against much light, against  
 many checks of your own conscien-  
 ces, against many very serious warn-  
 ings, and exhortations, many earnest  
 importunate beseechings and intrea-  
 ties you have had in the Ministry of  
 the Gospel, many motions and stir-  
 rings of the Spirit of God thereby?  
 Let your thoughts dwell upon these  
 things. Think what it is for the  
 great God, the Lord of glory to have  
 been slighted by a worm. Doth not  
 this deserve as ill things at the hands  
 of God as you can fear? Is it fit you  
 should



should apprehend what your desert is, tho' perhaps mercy may interpose, and avert the deserved dreadful event. And if he have signify'd his displeasure towards you hereupon, by desisting for the present, and ceasing to strive with you as he hath formerly done; if your heart be grown more cold, and dead, and hard, than sometime it was, if you have been left so as to fall into grosser sin; 'tis highly reasonable you should fear being finally forsaken of the blessed Spirit of God, and greatly fear it, but with an *useful fear*, that may awaken you most earnestly to endeavour his return to you, not with a *despairing fear* that will bind you up from any further endeavour for your soul at all.

And if upon all this (by death or otherwise) such a Ministry be withdrawn from you, as God did work by, in some degree, upon you, and you find not in that kind, what is so suitable to your state and case; take heed lest you be stupid under such a stroke. Think what it imports unto you, if God have, as it were, said

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concerning any servant of his (as Ezek. 2. 26.) I will make his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth, that he shall not be a reprover to you any more! Consider that God may by this, be making way that wrath may come upon you to the uttermost, and never let you have opportunity to know more, the things of your peace. Perhaps you may never meet with the man more, that shall speak so accommodately to your condition, that shall so closely pursue you thorough all the haunts and subterruges, and lurking holes, wherein your guilty convinced soul hath wont to hide it self, and falsely seek to heal its own wounds. One of more value may be less apt, possibly, to profit you. As a more possit Key doth not therefore alike fit every lock. And thy case may be such, that thou shalt never hear a sermon, or the voice of a preacher more.

7. And now in this case recollect your selves, what sins you have been formerly convinc'd of, under such a Ministry, and which you have persisted in notwithstanding. Were you never convinc'd of your neglecting God, and living as

without him in the world? of your low esteem and disregard of Christ? of your worldlines, your minding only the things of this earth, of your carnality, pride, self-seeking, voluptuousnes, your having been lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God? of your unprofitableness in your station? wherein you ought to have liv'd more conformably to christian rules and precepts, according to the relations wherein God had let you? were you never convinc'd how very faulty governours you have been, or members of families? parents, or masters, children, or servants, &c? What will this come to at last, that convictions have hitherto signify'd and served for nothing but increafe of guilt?

8. *Under all this weight and load of guilt, consider what you have to do for your souls!* Bethink your selves; are you to sit down and yield your selves to perish? Consider man, it is the business of thy soul, and of thine eternal state that is now before thee. Thou hast the dreadful flaming gulf of everlasting horror and misery in view,

view, hast thou nothing left thee to do but to throw thy self into it? methinks thou shouldst sooner reconcile thy thoughts to any thing than that; and that, if any thing at all be to be done for thine escape, thou shouldst rather set thy self about it, and do it. Thou art yet, alive, not yet in hell, yet the patience of God spares thee, thou hast yet time to consider, thou hast the power to think yet left thee, and canst thou use it no other way than to think of perishing? Think rather how not to perish. A great point is gained, if thou art but brought to say, *what shall I do to be saved?* which doth imply thou dost both apprehend the distressedness of thy case, and art willing to do any thing that is to be done for thy relief. And if thou art brought to this, thy circumstances may perhaps be such, that thou canst only put this question *to thy self*, and art only *thy self* to answer it, without a living, present guide, which may therefore make such an help *as this* needful to thee. Possibly some irresistible providence may have so cast thy lot, that thou art only now



to be thy own preacher; tho' it some-  
time was otherwise with thee; and  
things were said to thee most suitable to  
the condition of thy soul, which thou  
wouldst not then consider. It is yet  
prest upon thee to consider now, with  
some design to direct thy thoughts,  
that they run not into useless and trou-  
blesome confusion only. And your  
subject being *what course you are now to*  
*take, that you may escape eternal wrath*  
*and ruine?* 'Tis obvious to you to ap-  
prehend nothing is to be done *against,*  
*or without God,* but *with him,* and *by*  
*him.* Your utmost consideration can  
but bring the matter to this short  
point, that whereas you have highly  
offended the God that made you, in-  
cur'd his wrath, and made him your  
enemy, either to resist, or treat and  
supplicate. That madness which would  
let you intend *the former,* is not ca-  
pable of consideration at all. For, *if*  
*you consider,* will you contend with  
omnipotency, or fight with an all-  
devouring flame? And *as to the latter,*  
it is well for you, that it can be the  
matter of your consideration, that you  
have any encouragement to turn your  
thoughts

thoughts that way. You might have enemies that being provok't, and having you in their power, would never admit of treaty, nor regard your supplications, but fall upon you with merciless fury, and leave you nothing to think of but perishing. Here it is not so with you. The merciful God hath graciously told you *fury is not so in him*, but that (tho' if briars and thorns will set themselves in battle against him, he will easily pass thorough, and burn them up together, yet) if any will take hold of his strength, that they may make peace with him, they shall make peace with him. *Isai. 27. 4, 5.* You are to consider there is danger in your case, and there is hope, that your sin is not so little as to need no forgiveness, nor too great to be forgiven. Wherefore, whose case soever this is, since you may be forgiven, if you duly apply your selves, and must be forgiven, or you are undone, my further advice to you is, and you may, as to this, advise your self, having nothing else left you to do.

9. That you cast your selves down be-

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fore the mercy-seat of God, humble your selves deeply at his footstool, turn to him with all your soul, implore his mercy thorough Christ, make a solemn Covenant with him, taking him to be your God, and de-voting your self to him, to be his, accepting his son as your Lord and saviour, and resigning your soul with submission and trust entirely to him to be ruled and saved by him. That you are to do this the case is plain, and even speaks it self; how you are to do it may need to be more particularly told you.

1. Take heed that what you do in this be not the meer effect of your present apprehended distresse, but of the altered judgment, and inclination of your mind and heart. The apprehension of your distressed dangerous condition, may be an useful means and inducement to engage you more seriously to listen and attend to the proposals made to you in the Gospel. But if upon all this, it should be the sense of your heart that you would rather live still as without God in the world, and that you would never come to any such

such treaty or agreement with him, if meer necessity, and the fear of perishing did not urge you to it, you are still but where you were. Therefore, tho the feared danger was necessary to make you bethink your self, and consider what God propounds to you; that consideration ought to have that further effect upon you, to convince you of the equity and desireableness of the things themselves which he propounds, summarily, of your betaking your selves to him as your sovereign Lord, and supream Good, to fear and love, obey and enjoy him, in Christ Jesus, and accordingly ought to encline your heart thereto.

2. You are to consider in your entering into this Covenant with God in Christ, that it is not a transaction for the present only you are about, but for your whole life. *This God is to be your God, for ever, and ever, your God, and your guide even to the death.* Psal. 48. 14. You are to live in his fear and love, in his service and communion all your dayes, and must understand this to be the meaning and renour



nour of the Covenant which you make with him.

3. And hence, therefore, it is plain that your whole transaction in this matter must proceed from a *new nature*, and a new vital principle of grace and holiness in you. What you do herein will otherwise neither be *sincere* nor *lasting*. You can never embrace Religion for it self, without this, nor *continue on in a religious course*. What you do only from a temporary pang of fear upon you, is but from a kind of force that is for the present upon you, and will come to nothing, as soon as the impression of that fear wears off. The Religion which is *true*, and *durable*, is not from a *spirit of fear*, but of *love, power and a sound mind*. 2 Tim. 1. 7. You must be a *new creature*, Gods *workmanship*, created in *Christ Jesus unto good works* — that you may walk in them. The life of the new creature stands in *love to God*, as its way and course afterwards is a course of *walking with God*. If your heart be not brought to love God, and delight in him, you are still but dead towards God, and you still re-  
main

main alive unto sin, as before. Whereas, if you ever come to be a *Christian* indeed, you must be able truly to reckon your self dead to sin, and alive to God through *Jesus Christ*. Rom. 6.

11. Whereupon in your making the mentioned Covenant you must yield your self to God, as one that is alive from the dead, as 'tis, vers. 13. of the same chapter. A new nature and life in you, will make all that you do, in a way of duty, (whether immediately towards God or man, the whole course of godlines, righteousness and sobriety) easie and delightful to you. And because it is evident both from many plain Scriptures, and your own, and all mens experience, that you cannot be, your selves, the authours of this holy new life and nature, you must therefore further in entering into this Covenant

4. Most earnestly cry to God, and plead with him for his Spirit, by whom the vital unitive bond must be contracted between God in Christ and your souls. So this will be the Covenant of life and peace. Lord! how generally do the Christians of our age deceive

deceive themselves with a self-sprung Religion! *Divine* indeed in the *institution*, but merely *humane*, in respect of the *radication* and *exercise*. In which respects also it must be divine or nothing? What are we yet to learn that a *divine power* must *work* and *form* our Religion in us, as well as *divine authority* direct and *enjoy* it? Do all such scriptures go for nothing that tell us, *it is God that must create the new heart, and renew the right spirit in us*, that he must *turn us*, if ever we be *turned*, that we can never come to Christ, except the *father draw us*, &c. Nor is there any cause of discouragement in this, if you consider what hath before been said in this discourse. *Ask and you shall receive, seek, and you shall find, knock, and it shall be opened to you. Your heavenly father will give his Spirit to them that ask, more readily than parents do bread to their children, and not a stone.* But what if you be put to ask often, and wait long, this doth but the more endear the gift, and shew the high value of it. You are to remember how often you have griev'd, resisted, and vexed this Spirit,

nit, and that you have made God wait long upon you. What if the absolute sovereign Lord of all expect your attendance upon him? *He waits to be gracious — and blessed are they that wait for him.* Renew your applications to him. Lay from time to time that Covenant before you, which your selves must be wrought up unto a full entire closure with. And if it be not done at one time, try yet if it will another, and try again and again. Remember it is for your life, for your soul, for your all. But do not satisfy your self with only such faint motions within thee, as may only be the effects of thy own spirit, of thy dark, dull, listless, sluggish, dead, hard heart, at least not of the efficacious regenerating influence of the divine Spirit. Didst thou never hear what mighty workings there have been in others, when God hath been transforming and renewing them, and drawing them into living union with his Son, and himself thorough him? what an amazing penetrating light hath struck into their hearts, as 2 Cor. 4. 6. Such as when he was making the world, enlight-



enlightened the *Chas.* Such as hath made them see things that concerned them as they truly were, and with their own proper face, God, and Christ, and themselves, sin and duty, heaven and hell in their own true appearances! How effectually they have been awakened! How the terrors of the Almighty have beset and seized their souls! what agonies and pangs they have felt in themselves, when the voice of God hath said to them, *awake thou that sleepest, and arise from dead, and Christ shall give thee life! Ephes. 5. 14.* How he hath brought them down at his feet, thrown them into the dust, broken them, melted them, made them abase themselves, loath and abhor themselves, filled them with sorrow, shame, confusion, and with indignation, towards their own guilty souls, habituated them to a severity against themselves, unto the most sharp, and yet most unforced self-accusations, self-judging and self-condemnation; so as even to make them lay claim to hell, and confess the portion of devils belonged to them, as their own most deserved portion. And if *now* their eyes

eyes have been directed towards a Redeemer, and any glimmering of hope hath appeared to them; If now they are taught to understand God saying to them, Sinner, art thou yet willing to be reconciled, and accept a Saviour? O the transport into which it puts them! this is life from the dead! what is there hope for such a lost wretch as I? How tastful now is that melting invitation? how pleasant an intimation doth it carry with it, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest,* &c. If the Lord of heaven and earth do now look down from the throne of glory, and say, what, Sinner, wilt thou despise my favour and pardon, my Son, thy mighty merciful Redeemer, my grace and Spirit still! What can be the return of the poor abashed wretch, overawed by the glory of the divine Majesty, stung with compunction, overcome with the intimation of kindness and love? *I have heard of thee, O God, by the hearing of the ear, now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.* So inwardly is the truth of that word  
now

now felt, that thou mayest remember  
 and be confounded, and never open thy  
 mouth any more, because of thy shame,  
 when I am pacified towards thee, for all  
 that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.  
 Ezek. 16. 63. But, sinner, wilt thou  
 make a Covenant with me, and my  
 Christ? wilt thou take me for thy  
 God, and him for thy Redeemer and  
 Lord? And may I, Lord! yet, may  
 I! O admirable grace! wonderful spa-  
 ring mercy! that I was not thrown  
 into hell at my first refusal! Yea Lord  
 with all my heart and soul. I re-  
 nounce the vanities of an empty chea-  
 ring world, and all the pleasures of  
 sin; in thy favour stands my life.  
 Whom have I in heaven but thee?  
 whom on earth do I desire besides  
 thee? And O thou blessed Jesus, thou  
 Prince of the Kings of the earth, who  
 hast loved me, and washed me from  
 my sins in thy blood, and whom the  
 eternal God hath exalted to be a  
 Prince and a Saviour, to give repen-  
 tance and remission of sins, I fall  
 before thee, my Lord, and my God.  
 I here willingly tender my homage  
 at the footstool of thy throne. I take  
 thee

thee for the Lord of my life. I absolutely surrender and resign my self to thee. Thy love constrains me henceforth no more to live to my self, but to thee who dyedst for me, and didst rise again. And I subject and yeild my self to thy blessed light and power, O holy Spirit of grace, to be more and more illuminated, sanctify'd, and prepared for every good word and work, in this world, and for an inheritance among them that are sanctify'd in the other. Sinner, never give thy soul leave to be at rest till thou find it brought to some such transaction with God (the Father, Son, and Spirit) as this. So as that thou canst truly say, and dost feel thy heart is in it. Be not weary or impatient of waiting and striving, till thou canst say, this is now the very sense of thy soul. Such things have been done in the world, but O how seldom of latter daies. So God hath wrought with men to save them from going down to the pit, having found a ransom for them. And why may he not yet be expected to do so? He hath smitten rocks ere now, and

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made the waters gush out; nor is his hand shorted, or his ear heavy. Thy danger is not, Sinner, that he will be inexorable, but lest thou shouldst. He will be intreated, if thou wouldst be prevailed with to intreat his favour with thy whole heart.

And that thou mayst, and not throw away thy soul, and so great an hope thorough meer sloth, and loathness to be at some pains for thy life; Let the Text, which hath been thy directory about the things that belong to thy peace, be also thy motive, as it gives thee to behold the Son of God weeping over such as would not know those things. Shall not the Redeemers tears move thee! O hard heart! Consider what these tears import to this purpose. They signify the real depth, and greatness of the misery into which thou art falling! They drop from an intellectual and most comprehensive eye, that sees far, and pierces deep into things, hath a wide and large prospect; takes the compass of that forlorn state into which unreconcilable sinners are hastening, in all the hor-

mour of it. The Son of God did not weep vain and causeless tears, or for a light matter; nor did he for himself either spend his own, or desire the profusion of others tears. Weep not for me, O daughters of Jerusalem, &c. He knows the value of Souls, the weight of guilt, and how low it will press and sink them; the severity of Gods justice, and the power of his anger, and what the fearful effects of them will be, when they finally fall. If thou understandest not these things thy self, believe him that did, at least believe his tears.

2. They signifie the sincerity of his love and pity, the truth and tenderness of his compassion. Canst thou think his deceitful tears? his, who never knew guile? was this like the rest of his course? And remember that he who shed tears, did, from the same fountain of love and mercy, shed blood too! Was that also done to deceive? Thou makest thy self some very considerable thing indeed, if thou thinkest the son of God counted it worth his while to weep, and bleed, and dye, to deceive thee into a false esteem

of him and his love. But if it be the greatest madness imaginable to entertain any such thought, but that his tears were sincere and inartificial, the natural genuine expressions of undissembled benignity and pity, thou art then to consider what love and compassion thou art now sinning against; what bowels thou spurnest; and that if thou perishest, 'tis under such guilt as the devils themselves are not liable to, who never had a Redeemer bleeding for them, nor, that we ever find, weeping over them.

3. They shew the remedilessness of thy case, if thou persist in impenitency and unbelief till the things of thy peace be quite hid from thine eyes. These tears will then be the last issues of (even defeated) love, of love that is frustrated of it's kind design. Thou mayest perceive in these tears the steady unalterable laws of heaven, the inflexibleness of the divine justice, that holds thee in adamantine bonds, and hath sealed thee up, if thou prove incurably obstinate and impenitent, unto perdition; so that even the Redeemer himself, *he that is mighty*

*mighty to save*, cannot at length save thee, but only weep over thee, drop tears into thy flame, which assuage it not; but (tho they have another design, even to express true compassion) do yet unavoidably heighten, and increase the fervour of it, and will do so to all eternity. He even tells thee, Sinner, thou hast despised my blood, thou shalt yet have my tears. *That would have saved thee, these do only lament thee lost.*

But the tears wept over others as lost and past hope, why should they not yet melt thee, while as yet there is hope in thy case; If thou be effectually melted in thy very soul, and *looking to him whom thou hast pierced, dost truly mourn over him*, thou mayest assure thy self the prospect his weeping eye had of lost souls, did not include thee. His weeping over thee would argue thy case forelorn and hopeless. Thy mourning over him will make it safe and happy. That it may be so, consider further that

4. They signify how very intent he is to save souls, and how gladly he would save thine, if yet thou wilt ac-



cept of mercy while it may be had. For if he weep over them that will not be saved, from the same love that is the spring of these tears, would saving mercies proceed to those that are become willing to receive them. And that love that wept over them that were lost, how will it glory in them that are saved? *There* his love is disappointed and vext, crost in its gracious intendment; but *here* having compass't it, *how will he joy over thee with singing, and rest in his love!* And thou also, instead of being involv'd in a like ruine with the unreconciled Sinners of the *Old Jerusalem*, shalt be enrolled among the glorious Citizens of the *New*, and triumph together with them in eternal glory.

APPEN-

## APPENDIX.

**B**Ecause some things, not fit to be wholly omitted, were as little fit to come into the body of a practical discourse; 'twas thought requisite to subjoyn here the following additions, that will, severally have reference to distinct parts of the foregoing discourse.

As to what was said p. 81. of the unreasonable, and ill consequence of admitting it to be any mans duty to believe himself utterly rejected, and forsaken of God, inasmuch as it would make that his duty which were repugnant to his felicity. This is to be evinced by a consideration, which also, even apart by it self, were not without its own great weight, viz. that such a belief were inconsistent with his former stated and known duty: It were therefore inconsistent with his

*felicity, inasmuch as it would make that duty impossible to be performed, which, before, was by the constitution of the Evangelical law, made necessary to it, viz. Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The hope of acceptance is so necessary to both these, that the belief of a mans being finally rejected, or that he shall never be accepted, cannot but make them both impossible, equally impossible, as if he were actually in hell, as much impossible to him, as to the devils themselves. Nor is this impossibility, meerly, from a moral impotency, or that obduration of heart which were confessedly vicious, and his great sin, but from the natural influence of that belief of his being forever rejected, which (upon the mentioned supposition) were his duty. Besides, inasmuch as it is the known duty of a sinner under the Gospel, to turn to God through Christ, and it is also declared in the same Gospel (sufficiently to make it the common matter of faith to Christians) that none can of themselves turn to God, and believe in his Son, without the help of special efficacious*

cious grace ; It must hereupon, be a mans duty also to pray for that grace which may enable him hereto. How deep in wickedness was *Simon Magus*, even in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, when yet *Peter* calls him to repentance, and puts him upon praying for forgiveness, ( which must imply also his praying for the grace to repent ; ) but how can a man pray for that, which, at the same time, he believes shall not be given him ? yea, and which is harder, and more unaccountable, how can he stand obliged in duty, to pray for that, which, at the same time, he stands obliged in duty to believe he shall not obtain ? How can these two contrary obligations ly upon a man at the same time ? or is he to look upon the former as ceased ? should he reckon the Gospel as to him repealed ? or his impenitency and infidelity, even when they are at the highest, no sins ?

I know 'tis obvious to object, as to all this, the case of the unpardonable blasphemy against the holy Ghost ; which will be supposed to be stated and determined in the sacred Scriptures, and



and being so, the person that hath committed it, may equally be thought obliged, ( by a mixt assent, partly of *faith to what is written*, partly of *self-knowledge*, which he ought to have of his own acts and state ) to conclude himself guilty of it; whereupon all the former inconvenience and difficulty will be liable to be urged as above. But even as to this also, I see not but it may fitly enough be said, that though the *general nature* of that sin be stated, and sufficiently determined *in thesi*, yet that God hath not left it determinable in *hypothesi*, by any particular person, that he hath committed it. For admit that it *generally lies* in *imputing to the devil those works of the Holy Ghost, by which the truth of Christianity was to be demonstrated*, I yet see not how any man can apply this to his own particular case, so as *justly, and certainly* to conclude himself guilty of it. I take it for granted none will ever take the notion of *blasphemy* in that strictness, but that a man may possibly be guilty of this sin as well *in thought*, as *by speech*. I also doubt not but it will be acknowledged.

known on all hands, that *prejudice and malice against Christianity*, must have a great ingrency into this sin; not such malice as whereby, *knowing it to be the true Religion*, a man hates and detests it *as such* (which would suppose these Pharisees, whom our Saviour charges with it, or cautions against it, to have been, at that time, in their judgments and consciences, Christians) but such malignity, and strong prejudice as darkens and obstructs his mind, that he judges it *not to be true*, against the highest evidence of its being so; It will also be acknowledged, that some enmity and disaffection to *true Religion* is common to all men; more especially in their unregeneracy, and unconverted state.

Now let it be supposed that some person or other, of a very unwarrantably *sceptical Genius*, had opportunity to know certainly *the matter of fact*, touching the miraculous works wrought by our Saviour, and understood with all somewhat generally, of the doctrine which he taught; and that he sets himself *as a Philosopher*, to con-

consider the case. Suppose that, partly thorough prejudice against the holy design of Christianity, whereof there is some degree in all; and partly thorough shortnes of discourtse, not having thoroughly considered the matter; he thinks it possible that some *Demon* or other; with design, under a specious pretence, to impose upon, or amuse the credulous vulgar, may have done all those strange things. Suppose his judgment should for the present more incline this way. What if thinking this to be the case in the instance of *Apollonius Tyanæus*, he hath not yet, upon a slighter view, discerned enough to distinguish them, but thinks alike of both cases? yea and suppose he have spoken his sentiments to some or other. Perhaps, upon further enquiry and search, he might see cause to alter his judgment. And now, setting himself to enquire more narrowly, he perceives the unexceptionable excellent scope and tendency of our Saviours doctrine and precepts, considers the simplicity and purity of his life, contemplates further the awful greatness of his mighty works; but

but amidst these his deliberations, he finds among the rest of christian constitutions this severe one, *Mat. 12. 31, 32.* and begins to fear lest, supposing the truth of this excellent Religion, he have precluded himself of all the advantages of it by that former judgment of his; what is he to do in this case? what were he to be advised unto? what, to pass judgment upon himself, and his case as desperate? or not rather to humble himself before the God of heaven, ask pardon for his injurious rash judgment, and supplicate for mercy, and for further illumination, *in the mystery of God, of the Father, and of Christ?* Which course, that it may have a blessed issue with him, who dare venture to deny, or doubt? And what have we to say hereupon, but that in great wisdom and mercy, our Saviour hath only told us *there is such a sin, and what the general nature of it is, or whereabouts it lies, but the judgment of particular cases wherein, or of the very pitch and degree of malignity wherewith it is committed, he hath reserved to himself; intending further to strive with persons by his Spirit,*  
while



while he judges them yet within the reach of mercy, or withhold it, when he sees any to have arrived to that culminating pitch of malignity, and obstinacy, wherein he shall judge this sin *especially to consist?* And what inconvenience is it to suppose he hath left this matter, *touching the degree, humanely undeterminable.* The knowledge of it can do them *who have committed it* no good: And probably they have *by it* so blinded and stupified their own souls, as to have made themselves very little capable of apprehending that they have committed it, or of considering whether they have or no. But they are sunk into a deep abyſſe of darknes and death, so as that such knowledge may be as little possible, as it would be useful to them. All their faculties of intellection, consideration, and self-reflection, being (as to any such exercise) bound up in a stupifying dead sleep. And to what purpose should they have a rule by which to determine a case, who 1. Can receive no benefit by the determination, and 2. Who are supposed when they are to use it, to have

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no faculty sufficiently apt to make this sad (but true) judgment of their case by it? But for them who have not committed it, and who are consequently, yet capable of benefit by what should be made known about it, there is, therefore, enough made known for their real use and benefit. It will 1. Be of real use to many such, to know their danger of running into it. And it is sufficient to that purpose, that they are plainly told wherein the general nature of it consists, or whereabouts it lies; without shewing them the very point that hath certain death in it; or letting them know just how near they may approach it, without being sure to perish, when there is danger enough in every step they take towards it. As if there were some horrid desert, into any part whereof no man hath any business to come, but in some part whereof there is a dreadful gulf, whence arises a contagious halitus, which, if he come within the verge of it, will be certainly poysonous and mortal to him. What need is there that any man should know just how near he may come, without being sure to die for it?

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He is concerned to keep himself at a cautious awful distance. 2. It may be of great use to others, that are afflicted with very torturing fears lest they have committed it, *to know that they have not.* And they have enough also to satisfy them in the case. For their *very fear it self*, with its usual concomitants in such afflicted minds, is an argument to them that they have not. While they find in themselves any value of divine favour, any dread of his wrath, any disposition to consider the state of their souls, with any thought or design of turning to God, and making their peace; they have reason to conclude God hath hitherto kept them out of that fearful gulf; and is yet in the way, and in treaty with them. For since we are not *sufficient to think any thing (that good is) of our selves*, it is much more reasonable to ascribe any such thoughts or agitations of spirit *that have this design* to him, than to our selves, and to account that he is yet at work with us (at least in the way of *common grace*) tho' when our thoughts drive towards a conclusion, against

against our selves, that we have committed that sin, and towards despair thereupon, we are to apprehend a mixture of temptation in them; which we are concerned earnestly to watch and pray against. And yet even such temptation is an argument of such a ones not having committed that sin. For such as the devil may apprehend more likely to have committed it (and 'tis not to be thought he can be sure who have) he will be less apt to trouble with such thoughts, not knowing what the issue of that unquietnes may prove, and apprehending it may occasion their escaping quite out of his snare. And I do conceive this to be a safer method, of satisfying such as are perplext with this fear *in our dayes*, than to be positive in stating that sin *so*, or limiting it to *such circumstances*, as shall make it impossible to be committed in this age of the World. For let it be seriously considered, whether it be altogether an unsupposeable thing, that, *with some in our dayes*, there may be an equivallency, in point of light and evidence of the truth of Christianity, unto what

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*these Jews* had, whom our Saviour warns of the danger of this sin, *at that time when he so warned them*; his warning and cautioning them about it, implies that he judged them, at least in a possibility, *at that time*, of incurring the guilt of it. If the text *Mat. 12.* do not also imply that he reckoned them, *then*, actually to have committed it. For it is said, ver. 25. *he knew their thoughts*, i. e. considered the temper of their minds, and thereupon said to them that which follows concerning it. Let us consider wherein their advantage towards their being ascertained of the truth of the Christian Religion, was greater than we now can have. It was, chiefly, *in this respect* greater, that they had a nearer, and more immediate knowledge of the matter of fact, wherein *that evidence* which our Saviour refers to did consist. A more immediate way of knowing it they had; the most immediate the persons whom he warns (or charges) seem not to have had: For *these Pharisees*, it is said, heard of the cure of the *Demoniac*, not that they saw it. They took it upon the (no doubt

doubt sufficiently credible) report of others. Now let it be further considered, *what we have to ballance this one single advantage.* We have, to intelligent considering persons, rationally-sufficient evidence, of the *same matter of fact.* But how great things, *that have since followed,* have we the *sufficiently certain knowledge* of besides, beyond what they had in view, *at that time.* As the wonderful death of our Lord, exactly according to prediction; in many respects, together with all the unforetold amazing circumstances that attended it! His more wonderful resurrection, upon which so great a stress is laid for demonstrating the truth of the Religion he taught. The destruction of *Jerusalem,* as he foretold, and the shattered condition of the *Jewish nation,* as was also foretold, ever since. The strange successes of the Gospel in the first, and some following ages, by so unlikely means, against the greatest opposition imaginable, both of *Jews,* and *Pagans.* Not to insist on the *apostacy foretold,* in the Christian Church, with many more things that might be mentioned. Let

be considered whether *the want of a so immediate way of knowing some of these things*, be not abundantly compensated by the *greatness of the other things that are however sufficiently known*. And if such as have wit and leisure to consider these things *in our dayes*, are often prest to consider them, have them frequently represented, and laid before their eyes, if such, I say, have in view as *great evidence, upon the whole, of the truth of Christianity*, as *these Pharisees* had; it is then further to be considered, whether *it be not possible that some such may equal the Jewish malice*, against the holy design of our Religion. To which I only say, the Lord grant that none may. But if there be really cause to apprehend *such a danger*, some other way should be thought of to cure the trouble of some, than by the danger, and (too probable) ruine of others.

However, none should themselves make their own case incurable, by *concluding* that they have sin'd that sin, or by believing they are, otherwise, forsaken and rejected of God; so as that he will never more assist their endeavour to repent, and turn to him thorough the Mediatour.

If

If it be enquired here, since, as hath been shewn, some may be quite forsaken of God, while yet they live in the world; ought such to believe then they are not forsaken, and so believe an untruth that they may make it true, or try if they can better their condition by it? I answer, nor that neither. For that God will further assist an obstinate sinner, that hath long resisted his Spirit, and despised his mercy, is *no matter of promise*, to him, and *so no matter of faith*. When he doth conquer, at length, any such, 'tis of meer *unpromised favour*; (as was also shewn) *whereof* therefore, he gives others no ground to *despair*; and *for which* they are deeply concern'd, with great earnestnes, to supplicate. But if it be said, how can they pray for that whereof they have no promise? and can have no faith, since *what is not of faith is sin*, Rom. 14. 23. I answer, that passage of Scripture would, in this case, be much misapply'd. It speaks not of faith concerning the *certainty of any event to be expected*, but the *lawfulness of a work to be done*, and of *doubting*, not concerning the event, but my own act. Can any man in his wits doubt concerning his



own ~~act~~ in this case? whether it be better to pray for the grace of God to save him, than slight it and perish? nor are they without very encouraging promises concerning the event, *that God will be a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, Heb. 11. 6. And *that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*, Rom. 10. 13. which promises 'tis true the context of both shews, do speak of *believing prayer*. They are *to faith*, not *of it*, and import, that God will reward and *save* the believer: not that he will give faith to the obstinate, contemptuous unbeliever. If he do this, 'tis, (as was said) of unpromised bounty. But tho' they are not promises to give faith, they should induce it; and incline sinners to cast themselves down before the throne of so gracious a God, and seek grace to help them in their need, in confidence that he will never reject *penitent believing prayer*. They, indeed, that for their former wilful sinning, are utterly forsaken of God, will not thus apply themselves; but our question is not what they *will do*, but what they *should*. Because they would not, therefore they were forsaken,

ken, and because they yet will not, they are still, and finally forsaken. Their refusal proceeds not from any discouragement God hath given them, but from the malignity of their own hearts. God hath not repeal'd his Gospel towards them. The connection continues firm between the preceptive and promisory parts of it. Their infidelity is not become their duty, but remains their hainous sin, and the more deeply hainous by how much their own malignity holds them more strongly in it.

Unto what also is discoursed p. 99. concerning anger and grief, (or other passions) ascribed to God, it will not be unfit here to adde, that unless they be allowed to signify real aversian of will, no account is to be given what reality in him they can signify at all. For to say (what some do seem to satisfy themselves with) that they are to be understood *secundum effectum*, not *secundum affectum*, tho' true as to the negative part, is, as to the affirmative, very defective and short; for the effects of anger and grief, upon

which those names are put, when spoken of God, are not *themselves* in him, but in us. But we are still at a losse what they signify *in him*. Such effects must have some cause. And if they be effects which *he* works, they must have some cause *in himself* that is before them, and productive of them. This account leaves us to seek what *that cause* is, that is signify'd by *these names*. That it cannot be *any passion*, as the same names are wont to signify with us, is out of question. Nor indeed do those names *primarily*, and most *properly* signify *passion* in *our selves*. The *passion* is consequent only, by reason of that *inferiour nature* in us, which is susceptible of it. But the *aversion* of our mind and will is before it, and, in another subject, very separable from it, and possible to be without it. In the blessed God we cannot understand any thing lesse is signify'd than *real displicency* at the things whereat he is said to be *angry* or *grieved*.

Our shallow reason indeed is apt to suggest in these matters, *why is not that*

that prevented that is so displeasing? And it would be said with equal reason in reference to all sin permitted to be in the world, why was it not prevented? and what is to be said to this? shall it be said that sin doth not displease God? that he hath no will against sin? it is not repugnant to his will? yes; it is to his *revealed will*, to his *law*. But is that an *untrue Revelation*? His law is not his will *it self*, but the *signum*, the discovery of his will. Now, is it an insignificant sign? a sign that signifies nothing? or to which there belongs no correspondent *significandum*? nothing that is signify'd by it? Is that which is signify'd (for sure no one will say it signifies nothing) his *real will*, yea or no? who can deny it? that will, then, (and a most calm, sedate, impassionate will it must be understood to be) sin, and consequently the consequent miseries of his creatures, are repugnant unto. And *what will* is that? 'tis not a *peremptory will concerning the event*, for the event falls out otherwise; which were, upon that supposition, impossible; for *who hath*



*both resisted his will?* as was truly intimated by the personated questionist, *Rom. 9. 19.* but *impertinently*, when Gods will of *another* (not a contrary) kind, *i. e.* concerning *another object*, was in the same breath refer'd unto, *why doth he yet find fault?* 'tis not the *will of the event* that is the measure of *faultiness*; for then there could not have been sin in the world, nor consequently misery; which only, by the Creators pleasure, stands connected with it. For nothing could fall out against that irresistible will. The objector then destroys his own objection, so absurdly, and so manifestly, as not to deserve any other reply than that which he meets with. *Nay, but who art thou, O man, that replyest against God?*

or And what is the *other object* about which the divine will is also conversant? *matter of duty*, and what stands in connection with it, not abstractly and separately, but as it is so connected, *our felicity*. This is objectively *another will*, as we justly distinguish divine acts, that respect the  
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creature, by their different objects. Against *this* will falls out all the sin and misery in the world.

All this seems plain and clear, but is not enough. For it may be further said, when God *will* this or that *to be my duty*, doth he not will *this event*, viz. *my doing it*? otherwise wherein is his will withstood, or not fulfilled in my not doing it? He will'd this *to be my duty*, and it is so. I do not, nor can hinder it from being so, yet *I do it not*, and that he will'd not. If all that his will meant was that *this should be my duty*, but *my doing it* was not intended; his will is entirely accomplished, it hath its full effect, in that such things are constituted, and do remain my duty, upon his signification of this his will, *my not doing it*, not being within the compass of the *object*, or the *thing willed*.

If it be said, he will'd *my doing it*, i. e. that I *should* do it, not that I *shall*, the same answer will recur, viz. that

that his will hath still its *full effect*, this effect still remaining, that *I should do it*, but that *I shall* he will'd not.

It may be said, I do plainly go against his will however; for his will was that I should do so, or so, and I do not what he will'd I should. 'Tis true, I go herein against his will, if he will'd not only *my obligation*, but *my action* according to it. And indeed it seems altogether unreasonable, and unintelligible, that he should will to oblige me to that, which he doth not will me to do.

Therefore it seems out of question, that the holy God doth constantly and perpetually, in a true sense, will the *universal obedience*, and the *consequent felicity* of all his creatures capable thereof; &c. He doth will it with *simple complacency*, as what were highly grateful to him, simply considered by it self. Who can doubt, but that *purity, holiness, blessedness*, where-soever they were to be beheld among his creatures, would be a pleasing and

and delightful spectacle to him, being most agreeable to the perfect excellency, purity, and benignity of his own nature, and that their deformity and misery must be consequently unpleasing? But he doth not *efficaciously will* every thing that he *truly wills*. He never will'd the obedience of all his intelligent creatures so, as effectually *to make them all obey*, nor their happiness, *so as to make them all be happy*, as the event shews. Nothing can be more certain, than that he did not *so will* these things; for then nothing could have fal'n out to the contrary, as we see much hath. Nor is it at all unworthy the love and goodness of his nature not so to have will'd, with that effective will, the universal sinlesnes, and felicity of all his intelligent creatures. The *divine nature* must comprehend *all excellencies* in it self, and not be limited to that *one onely of benignity*, or an aptnes to acts of beneficence. For then it were not infinite, not absolutely perfect, and so not divine. All the acts of his will must be consequently conform



form and agreeable to the most perfect wisdom. *He doth all things according to the counsel of his will.* He wills, 'tis true, the rectitude of our actions, and what would be consequent thereto, but he first, and more principally wills *the rectitude of his own.* And not only not to do an unrighteous, but not an inept, or unfit thing. We find he did not think it fit efficaciously to provide concerning all men, that they should be made obedient and happy, as he hath concerning some. That in the general he makes a difference, is to be attributed to his wisdom, *i. e.* his wisdom hath in the general made this determination, *not to deal with all alike,* and so we find it ascribed to his wisdom that he doth make a difference; and in what a transport is the holy Apostle in the contemplation and celebration of it upon this account! *Rom. 11. 33.* *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* But now when in particular, he comes to make this dif-

difference between one person, and another, there being no reason in the object to determine him *this way*, more *than that*, his designing some for the objects of special favour, and waving others (as to such special favour) when all were in themselves alike; in that case wisdom hath not so proper an exercise, but it is the work of free, unobliged sovereignty here to make the choice. *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.* Ephes. 1. 5.

Yet in the mean time, while God doth not *efficaciously* will all mens obedience introductive of their happiness, doth it follow he wills it not *really* at all? to say he wills it *efficaciously*, were to contradict experience, and his Word; to say he wills it not *really*, were equally to contradict his Word. He doth will it, but not *primarily*, and as the more principal object of his will, so as to effect it, notwithstanding whatsoever  
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unfitness he apprehends in it, viz. that he so overpower all, as to make them obedient and happy. He really wills it, but hath greater reasons than this or that mans salvation, why he effects it not. And this argues no imperfection in the divine will, but the perfection of it, that he wills things agreeably to the reasonableness and fitness of them.

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**THE END.**

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